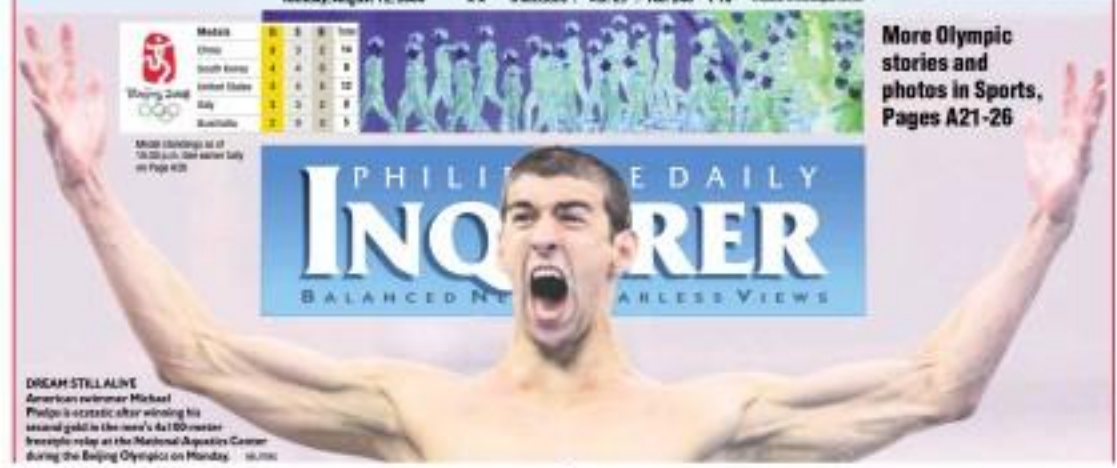
Tuesday, August 12, 2008 ★★ 6 sections / Vol. 23 / No. 240 P18 www.inquirer.net



More Olympic stories and photos in Sports, Pages A21-26

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALCONED NEWS FEARLESS VIEWS

DREAM STILL ALIVE
American swimmer Michael Phelps is ecstatic after winning his second gold in the men's 4x100-meter freestyle relay at the National Aquatics Center during the Beijing Olympics on Monday. AP, PTIC

Phelps' gold quest: 2 down, 6 to go

BEIJING—GOLDEN OLDIE JASON LEZAK dug out one of the greatest relay anchor legs in Olympic history on Monday to keep alive Michael Phelps' quest for an historic eight gold medals at the Beijing Olympics.

Lezak, at 32 the oldest man on the US team's swimming roster, churned out an incredible closing swim of 46.06 seconds to reel in French world record-holder Alain Bernard and finger coach the Americans to an astonishing world-record victory in the 4x100-meter freestyle relay.

The US team of Phelps, Garrett Weber-Gale, Cullen Jones and Lezak broke the world record by almost four seconds, winning the gold in 3:08.24.

It was a never-say-die team performance that sent pulses racing inside the charged Water Cube and set off Phelps into a wild, pumping primal scream as Lezak's name

PHELPS | A6

Part of fireworks display faked?

NOT ALL THE FIREWORKS SEEN on TV during the opening of the Beijing Olympics on Friday night were real. Some were actually computer-generated images.

An early part of the televised spectacular was "faked" because

PART A6

GMA resurrects Cha-cha

Sabio admits brother tried to influence Meralco case

By Jaime Ang

COURT OF APPEALS JUSTICE JOSE Sabio Jr. may have unwittingly involved his brother and admitted to more apparent lapses as he continued undergoing cross-examination yesterday at the resumption of the hearing by a panel formed by the Supreme Court to investigate improprieties and an alleged bribery attempt related to the election of Manila Electric Co.'s board of directors.

Sabio was interrogated by panel members—retired Supreme Court Associate Justices Romeo Callejo Sr. and

SABIO | A11

52 Filipino drug 'mules' jailed in China

By Lelia B. Salaverria

BEIJING (STA PILOT)—A TOTAL OF 52 Filipinos, most of them women and two of them pregnant, have been languishing in China's jails for allegedly acting as "mules" to bring illegal drugs, mostly heroin, into the communist country.

This year's rise in the number of Filipinos detained in China for acting as

52 FILIPINOS | A6

THREE PRESIDENTS President Macapagal-Arroyo shows Swiss President Pascal Couchepin the reception hall of Malacañang where they keep all the paintings of the Philippine presidents. PRESIDENTIAL PHOTO

Dureza: Federalism needs constitutional amendment

By Christine O. Avendaño

THE CAT IS OUT OF THE BAG.

"We advocate federalism as a way to ensure long-lasting peace in Mindanao," President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday told visiting Swiss President Pascal Couchepin.

It was the first time Ms Arroyo talked about a shift to a federal form of government since the Supreme Court shot down a "people's initiative" in October 2006 to amend the Constitution in a bid to introduce a parliamentary system.

Although Ms Arroyo did not talk about Charter change in her remarks during a state luncheon for Couchepin, Press Secretary Jesus Dureza told reporters that this was "the way forward" in carrying out a deal for an expanded Muslim homeland to end four

GMA RESURRECTS A6

Moro rebels stand ground; Air Force bombs hideouts

Inquirer Mindanao and Nikko Dizon, Terra Quintenando, and Allison W. Lopez in Manila

COTABATO CITY—MAGUINDANAO bands of Moro rebels reportedly occupied portions of a highway in North Cotabato, stopping passenger buses, while other guerrillas raised their own flags to signify their goal of independence, as peacekeepers struggled to end fighting that has left 13 people dead.

For the second straight day, Philippine Air Force attack aircraft swept in to action, pummeling suspected rebel hideouts with rockets and 250-lb and 500-lb bombs, a PAF official said.

In one area, fighting spilled over to

MORO REBELS A6

Excellent, Comelec says of high-tech ARMM polls

By Julie S. Alipala in Zamboanga and Kristine L. Alave in Manila

DESPITE SPORADIC VIOLENCE AND technical glitches, the Commission on Elections yesterday declared the computerized balloting in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) an "excellent" exercise.

Comelec Chair Jose Melo said 50 to 60 percent of the 1.6 million registered voters cast ballots in 1,901 precincts equipped with two sets of computers each where they either blotted circles beside the names of their candidates or touched screens for their selections.

Results of the vote for governor, vice governor and 24 members of the regional legislative assembly are expected to be announced on Wednesday.

Melo said he was "very happy" with the results of the landmark polls—the

EXCELLENT | A11

130,000 villagers flee fighting in N. Cotabato

By Jeoffrey Maitem and Nash Madasa, Inquirer Mindanao and Alexie Pagsa in Manila

PIKIT, NORTH COTABATO—"THE rebels came and told us to leave. We were scared. Now, we have nothing. We left everything and our crops behind."

This was how housewife Normina Sahali, 46, described the fear that gripped her family and forced them to flee their village in this town after fighting erupted anew yesterday between government forces and Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) rebels.

Fear of getting caught in the crossfire has forced thousands of villagers to abandon their homes in recent days, pushing the number of evacuees in North Cotabato to swell to about 130,000 people, officials said.

Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno laid the blame for the dramatic increase in the number of evacuees on the MILF some of whose units had defied a government ultimatum to withdraw from villages they had occupied in the recent two weeks.

"The failure of the MILF to restrain their forces in the field has brought about this large escalation in the number of evacuees," Puno said at a press conference in Camp Crame.

He said "clearing operations" be-

130,000 FILIPINOS | A6

ARMM soldiers inspect people lining up to vote at the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) elections in Shariff Aguak, Maguindanao. REUTERS

WEATHER FORECAST

PAGASA: Typhoon on the eastern section of Northern Luzon will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.

Metro Manila	Partly cloudy	Laoag	Partly cloudy
Baguio	Partly cloudy	Basco	Partly cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly cloudy	Cubi	Partly cloudy
Iloilo	Partly cloudy	Dagupan	Partly cloudy
Catarman	Partly cloudy	San Jose	Partly cloudy
Legaspi	Partly cloudy	Tacloban	Partly cloudy
Puerto Princesa	Partly cloudy	Zamboanga	Partly cloudy
Cebu	Partly cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Partly cloudy
Coron	Partly cloudy	Davao	Partly cloudy

Source: Weather Bureau

Tune in your feedback: inquirer.news.second@gmail.com or 896-6000 (local 2)

Second FRONTPAGE

E-mail: pr_news@inquirer.com.ph Website: www.inquirer.net/edition

EZ2 — FOUR DIGIT: 8 21 — 8 9 1 0

SUPERTRIS: 4 4 4 — 5 1 4 — 2 7 4

MEGALOTTO 6/45: 1 11 15 17 33 42

P9,557,964.00

$34M in Marcos funds missing

Gov't audit finds money held in escrow never transferred to Treasury

By Jocelyn R. Uy and Christine O. Avendaño

SOME $34.13 MILLION IN SWISS BANK DEposits recovered by the government from the accounts of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos is missing, according to the Commission on Audit.

In its 2003 audit report on the Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG), the COA noted that at least $34,130,466.85, or over P1.43 billion, in Marcos Swiss deposits placed in an escrow account at the Philippine National Bank (PNB) was not turned over to the Bureau of Treasury (BTR.)

The PCGG had executed a Deed of Release with Jurisdiction four years ago acknowledging and confirming PNB's full compliance with the writ of execution issued by the Sandiganbayan, ordering the transfer of the Swiss deposits to the BTR.

But an audit of the funds revealed that only $634,044,893.55 was transferred and recorded in the books of accounts of the BTR.

"The balance of $34,130,466.85 remained unaccounted/unrecorded in the books," the COA noted.

The money was part of the more than $658 million transferred more than 10 years ago to an escrow account in the PNB while the Supreme Court deliberated the ownership of the deposit.

In July 2003, the high court finally forfeited the Swiss deposits in favor of the government. The Sandiganbayan issued a writ of execution on Jan. 22, 2004. Eight days later, the PNB filed a manifestation with compliance before the assigned court.

The PCGG informed the COA that it had no record on file as far as the Swiss deposits in the PNB were concerned.

Complete accounting

On the other hand, the PNB Trust Department informed the COA that the bank had been regularly submitting monthly financial reports to the PCGG.

The COA asked the PCGG to order the PNB to submit a complete accounting, financial statements and other documents supporting the funds held in trust ... from the time the amount of $634,044,893.55 was transferred from the trust deposit.

It also advised the PCGG to transfer the money to a government depository bank such as the Land Bank of the Philippines or the Development Bank of the Philippines after a complete accounting of the supposedly missing funds.

Swiss support

Swiss President Pascal Couchepin, meanwhile, assured President Macapagal-Arroyo of his government's support for the recovery of Marcos assets in Switzerland and in third countries during a bilateral meeting in Malacañang yesterday.

Couchepin is in the Philippines on a two-day state visit.

Twenty-three years after Marcos was ousted by people power, the country continues to recover billions of pesos in allegedly illegal wealth he acquired and stashed abroad, including Switzerland.

Just compensation

"The two Presidents expressed satisfaction over the past close and successful cooperation on the restitution of Marcos assets from Switzerland to the Philippines following the final ruling by the Swiss Federal Court in 1998," said a joint statement issued yesterday by the two countries.

During their talk, Ms Arroyo also briefed Couchepin on the status of a bill pending in Congress that aims to compensate thousands of Filipinos who were victims of human rights violations during the Marcos regime.

The House version is on its third and final reading.

Ms Arroyo assured Couchepin that her administration "attaches great importance to the speedy passage of the law so that human rights victims may be justly compensated," according to the joint statement.

10,000 OFWs

For his part, Couchepin conveyed "the firm expectation of the Swiss government that the Philippine Congress may soon enact the Human Rights Compensation Bill," the joint statement said.

During a state luncheon she hosted for Couchepin, Ms Arroyo thanked Switzerland for hosting 10,000 Filipino workers there, employed in the Embassy, consulates and hotels and homes for the aged.

"As for our economic ties, we acknowledge the important role of 60 Swiss firms operating in the Philippines [and] their contribution[s] to our national development," she said.

ASIA INTERNATIONAL AUCTIONEERS, INC.
Your Best Source of Quality Machines in Asia

TRUCKS & EQUIPMENT
3-DAY Public Auction
AUGUST 14, 15 & 16, 2004
Inspection Dates: AUGUST 10, 11, 12 & 13
INSPECTION GOOD!
21 – MOTOR GRADERS
KOMATSU GD80A-3 (3) unit Blade
23 – ROUGH TERRAIN CRANES
111 – EXCAVATORS
CATERPILLAR EXCAVATOR
65 – WHEEL LOADERS
75 – BULLDOZERS
CAT D9R = CAT D9G with RIPPER
79 – WING YARD
80 – CARGO TRUCKS
7 – ROAD SWEEPERS
2 – CAR CARRIERS
82 – BOOM TRUCKS
83 – AGRICULTURAL TRACTORS
QUALITY TRUCKS & EQUIPMENT THAT WILL DO THE JOB FOR YOU!
Inquire & Register on-line via: www.asia-intl-auctioneers.com
LOWER MAU CAMP, ARGONAUT HI-WAY, SUBIC BAY FREEPORT ZONE, PHILIPPINES
Tel.: +63-47-252-3333 * Fax: +63-47-252-6848
E-mail: aiainc@subictel.com

Life getting worse for 6 in 10 Filipinos, SWS survey shows

By Cyril L. Bautista
Inquirer Research

A RECORD-HIGH SIX IN 10 Filipinos adults are feeling the economic crunch and pessimism is spreading to levels unseen by Social Weather Stations (SWS) pollsters since 1983, a financially turbulent year marred by the assassination of opposition leader Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino.

An SWS survey for the second quarter this year showed 62 percent of respondents said their quality of life had worsened. Only 12 percent said it had improved, for a gaping lower gap of minus 50, the worst since the second quarter of 1983.

The gap was lower gap for record levels in the Visayas (minus 61) and Luzon, excluding Metro Manila (minus 49). It was also marked among the poorer socioeconomic classes D (minus 51) and E (minus 53).

SWS conducted the nationwide survey among 1,200 adult Filipinos from June 27 to 30.

Optimism fell by double-digit levels in all regions except Metro Manila compared to March this year.

Thirty percent of respondents expected their personal quality of life to deteriorate in the next 12 months, while 24 percent were optimistic about it, for a net personal optimism rate of minus 6.

This is over 18 points lower than the previous quarter's rate of plus 6, and 29 points lower than last year's rate of plus 23.

Net personal optimism stumbled in the Visayas (plus 2 but fourth in ranking 17), Luzon (excluding Metro Manila (from plus 34 to plus 11) and Mindanao, (from plus 2 to minus 9).

It stayed at minus 9 in Metro Manila.

Optimism also declined in all socioeconomic classes, with the deepest sagging from eight points among members of the upper class ABC (from plus 22 to plus 14) to 12 points in the lowest class E (from minus 1 to minus 13).

As for the economy, 52 percent expected it to get worse in the next 12 months and 12 percent expected it to get better, for a net economic optimism rate of minus 39, or 30 points lower than last quarter's rate of minus 29.

Net economic optimism fell in all regions, with the decline ranging from five points in the rest of Luzon to 14 points in the Visayas, and among all classes, from eight points among class E respondents to 23 points among classes ABC.

"It is normal to be more optimistic about one's own quality of life than about the economy as a whole," SWS said.

PROtech ULTIMATE
3 in 1
6-inch Vault Door
INTEGRATES FUNCTIONS OF
MAIN DOOR
EMERGENCY DOOR
EMERGENCY VENTILATOR
DON'T CHANCE IT. PROTECH IT.
PROTECTION TECHNOLOGY, INC.
Physical Security Equipment
www.protech.com.ph

ERC averts P1-kWh spike in power rates

THE ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISsion has issued an order that would prevent price disruptions at the wholesale electricity spot market (WESM), which could otherwise raise power rates by as much as 91 per kilowatt-hour (kWh).

ERC executive director Francis Saturnino Juan said the solution the commission now was to suspend a provision in the rules for default wholesale supply arrangements (DWSA), which deals with electricity obtained by Wesm participants beyond their contracted levels.

Section 3.5 of the rules states a distribution utility with an existing transition supply contract (TSC) with National Power Corp. (Napocor) but which still decides to source some of its electricity supply from the Wesm would no longer enjoy the 10-percent bandwidth as stated in the TSC.

As a result, all kilowatthours—or electricity shortages from or Wesm consumers beyond its contracted levels — would be considered taken from the Wesm and would be priced accordingly.

But since the effective settlement rate at the Wesm hit a high P14 per kWh in July, Juan said the ERC had to step in to prevent this from being passed on to consumers.

"We were directed by the ERC Chairperson Durian to look into these problems and recommend to the commission what would be done to mitigate the high prices," Juan said in a telephone interview. Abigail L. Re-

Filipinos move out of Georgia

THE EVACUATION OF 95 Filipino workers from the Eastern European country of Georgia to neighboring Turkey and Azerbaijan started yesterday following the escalation of violence between Georgian and Russian forces, said Foreign Undersecretary for Migrant Workers Affairs Esteban Conejos Jr.

Conejos said he was informed by Philippine Ambassador to Turkey Jaleandro Guinsatao that the embassy had secured entry visas for 68 Filipinos—not 88 as earlier reported—to Turkey and Azerbaijan. Guinsatao has jurisdiction over the diplomatic corpses in the two countries.

Conejos said 33 Filipinos employed by Israel Construction in Tbilisi in the province of South Ossetia were en route to Azerbaijan where their compatriots based.

On the other hand, 20 Filipinos and their dependents working at a port management project in Batumi were ready to head to the Turkish border.

"They are moving out right now. The Filipinos in Tbilisi have started crossing towards Turkey while those in Batumi are leaving in a few minutes," Conejos said.

He said three other Filipinos working for a British employer in Tbilisi were issued visas in Turkey but they had not decided whether to leave or not.

Two others...are married to a British diplomat...were still being tracked by the embassy, Conejos said.

The evacuation of the Filipinos was ordered by Vice President Noli de Castro, also the presidential adviser on overseas Filipino workers, after he noted the worsening security situation in South Ossetia.

—Cynthia D. Balana

Metrobank

Use your Metrobank Credit Card and win FREE shopping for a year!

Keep using your Metrobank Credit Card!
Call 8-700-700 (Metro Manila) or 1-800-1-888-5775 (Domestic Toll Free)

Metrobank
You're in good hands

A CALL FOR DISCERNMENT AND UNITY

We speak in behalf of all marginalized sectors of Mindanao that include the Bangsamoro people, the indigenous peoples and migrant settlers particularly the women, children, and the displaced civilian communities who stand to benefit from the successful conclusion of the GRP-MILF peace talks. For many decades now, our lives depict the curse of the so-called "collateral damage" due to a long internecine armed conflict. The conflict and war in Mindanao must end now. We cannot allow this cycle of violence to further victimize our children and the next generation. We beg all the branches of government, the media and civil society groups to help end the Mindanaoans' long years of suffering.

The Temporary Restraining Order (TRO) issued by the Supreme Court effectively stalled the signing of the MOA on Ancestral Domain. While we consider this a major setback in our quest for peace, we are confident that the Supreme Court cannot allow itself to become a stumbling block in resolving a political conflict that requires a political solution. We have a complete trust in the collective wisdom of the Supreme Court and by God's will, Insha Allah, the Government Peace Panel will eventually be allowed to proceed with the signing of the MOA.

As we open the avenues for debate on the Ancestral Domain agenda, we beg everyone, especially politicians, military, the media and other vested interest groups, to let it proceed without fueling the centuries-old biases and prejudices among the people of Mindanao. There is a strong need for everyone to correct the historical injustice committed against the Bangsamoro and indigenous peoples in Mindanao and in other regions in the country. Definitely, there is a very urgent need to reverse the situation of fear, violence, hatred, anger and trauma among the people in the conflict-affected areas.

From August 7, 2004 to August 2, 2008, a total of 110 consultations, related to the peace process, were conducted all over Mindanao, according to the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process and members of the Government Peace Panel. Those consulted were academicians, business chambers, civilians, community leaders, indigenous communities, local government units, military personnel, organizations, and religious leaders. On the side the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), it also spearheaded consultations among Muslim communities since the peace talks resumed; the largest assembly gathered almost a million people in Camp Darapanan in 2006.

Definitely, there is a need for continuing consultations, dialogues and information dissemination so that people can come up with well informed positions on the MOA on AD. This we commit to help undertake as we proceed in educating our people on the contents of the MOA. Let the debate however proceed in the spirit of dialogue and utmost respect. The Bangsamoro people and indigenous peoples have the fundamental right to self-determination recognized under international laws.We strongly support them and demand that this right be respected and fulfilled.

There is a need to clarify misconception that Christians will be evicted out of Mindanao once the BJE is established. Under the MOA-AD, "vested property rights upon the entrenchment of the BJE shall be recognized and respected". This means that an ordinary Mindanaoan's landholding will be respected and protected contrary to what is being spread now that Christians will lose ownership of their land titles. Ancestral Domain as defined under the MOA "refer to those held under claim of ownership, occupied or possessed, by themselves or through the ancestors of the Bangsamoro people, communally or individually since time immemorial". This provision refers to a political territory rather than individual land titles which are already vested and respected under the MOA.

We likewise support the struggle of the Indigenous Peoples in their ancestral domain claims. Under the MOA "The freedom of choice of the Indigenous people shall be respected". It will be incumbent upon the indigenous peoples if they would like to join the BJE or not.

Thus, the sovereign will of the people to be part or not of the BJE is given utmost importance by the MOA on AD through a plebiscite. Residents of the 735 barangays covered under Category A which constitute the proposed expansion of the Bangsamoro homeland shall have the freedom to vote for inclusion or exclusion in the BJE.

There is also a need to take into consideration some concerns of kindred organizations in Manila that the GRP-MILF peace talks could be used to initiate Charter Change. Indeed, there is a need for a comprehensive legislative action given the need to change institutional arrangements between the BJE and the national government. Be that as it may, whether there will be Cha-cha or not, let it be clear that based on the timeframe of the MOA, this will only proceed not earlier than 2010. It will take the parties twelve (12) months after the signing to proceed with the plebiscite and a total of fifteen (15) months to complete the negotiations and resolve all outstanding issues on the Comprehensive Compact. Given this timeframe there will be no material time to undertake Cha-cha via the GRP-MILF talks.

What is clear at this point is that the interests of the peace process and those who are against charter change, are not diametrically opposed. We ourselves will not allow any partisan political interest to tarnish the legitimacy and primacy of the peace process.

This is an appeal that we pose to everyone especially our politicians who in the past few days became willing mouthpiece in fueling chaos, fear, hatred and communal violence. Let us all be responsible enough to tackle this issue in an intelligent and dispassionate manner, bearing in mind that we are all brothers and sisters, and that everyone in this country has the right and deserve to be treated with respect and dignity.

August 11, 2008
Davao City

SIGNED:

Mindanao Peoples Caucus-Bantay Ceasefire
Interreligious Solidarity Movement for Peace
Allah-Mujadilah Development Foundation
Waging Peace Philippines
Bangsamoro Women Solidarity Forum
Organization of Teduray and Lambangian Conference
Tulung Lupah Sug
GINAPALADTAKA Space for Peace
Mindanao Solidarity Network
Consortium of Bangsamoro Civil Society
Initiatives for International Dialogue
Assembly of D'arul Ifta
Bangsamoro Women Solidarity Forum
Peacebuilders Community
United Youth for Peace and Development
Alternate Forum for Research in Mindanao (AFRIM), Inc.
Suligan-Mindanao
Balay Rehabilitation Center, Inc.
Suligan Mindanaw
Suara Kallintad
Tiyakap Kallintad
Muslim Multisectoral Movement for Peace and Development
Anak Mindanao
Moro Human Rights Center
Bangsamoro People's Solidarity for Peace

MINDANAO PEOPLES CAUCUS

2nd Floor, Ritz Building, McArthur Highway,
(In front of Matina Gallera),
Matina, Davao City
Tel. No. (082) 299-3918
www.mindanaopeoplescaucus.org
E-mail Address: mindanaopeoplescaucus@gmail.com

Cops, gov't prosecutors get their act together

By Nancy Carvajal

EVERY TIME CRIMinal charges are dismissed and a suspect walks free, government prosecutors and the police point an accusing finger at each other for bungling the case.

To close the rift, the Department of Justice, National Police Commission (Napolcom) and National Capital Regional Police Office (NCRPO) recently conducted a "Prosecution, law enforcement and community coordinating seminar conference and dialogue."

"The undertaking was meant to identify problems and address areas where law enforcement is weak to ensure a hundred percent conviction, particularly in high profile cases," Senior Supt. Fritz Reyes, a participant, told the Inquirer in an interview.

Some said the dialogue, held at NCR, PO headquarters last Friday and participated in by Metro Manila district directors and police chiefs, was meant to correct mistakes made in past cases.

"This is to close any weaknesses and achievements in pursuing criminals who have capable lawyers to argue their cases," he added.

The police, he said, are blamed, or worse, accused of corruption when suspects go free through a series of legal maneuvers.

He said dismissals from the DOJ and Napolcom also loopholes in the presentation of evidence as the human court accused, particularly those charged with violating the Dangerous Drugs Act, were acquitted.

"Cases are usually dismissed on technicalities and among those cited was the marking of evidence. Cases should be airtight with more attention given to details," Reyes said.

He said the police were also urged to come up with more documentary rather than testimonial evidence.

"While the proper equipment and preservation technology is should now be easier to pin down suspects in court," he said.

PSBank Prime Time Deposit

7.00%* Guaranteed Interest paid monthly

• Minimum of P50,000
• 5-year placement, tax-free

*Rate is gross of tax

Manage your account online via Philweb Remote Banking. Open a time deposit now or pay at 143 branches nationwide.

3rd executive development program on supply chain management

September 20 - March 14, 2009

Module I: Integrated Supply Chain Management
Module II: Demand and Supply Management
Module III: Strategic Purchasing
Module IV: Distribution and Transportation Strategies
Module V: Core Management Skills

THE ATENEO BRAND IS YOUR CAREER ADVANTAGE

For details and registration, call Ateneo - Francis de Leon at 926 2042, Marieth Calleno at 840 3192 or email ccc-mbd@ape.ateneo.edu; PSM - Arnie Punzalan-Salleya at 634 0555 or email ateneo@psm.org / secretariat@psm.org

Visit and register ONLINE at www.ccc.ateneo.edu

Center for Continuing Education

PHILIPPINE INSTITUTE FOR SUPPLY MANAGEMENT

WORLD CLASS SLIMMING, FITNESS, FACE AND SKIN BY SLIMMERS WORLD

"How I lost 6 pounds... and gained a Bikini body in just 30 days"!

CORE POWER Training plus BIOMETRICS is the Ultimate in FITNESS, FAT & CELLULITE LOSS. It's the way that Pearl Kellie Ilas & the Under Medical Supervision to win the Miss Bikini Philippines - International pageant.

BUY 1 MONTH, GET 1 MONTH FREE!

- NO MONTHLY DUES! ON LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP
- NO JOINING FEES! CREDIT CARD OPTIONS AT 0%
- MEDICAL SUPERVISION AT ALL CENTERS

PLUS!

PERSONAL TRAINING

ALL THE LATEST AEROBICS

BUY 15 TREATMENTS GET 15 FREE!

SHANGHAI DETOXIFIER | HOT MASSAGE | METRACELL FACE | BODY THINNER

MESO WHITE * MESO REINVENTION * COSMETIC FILLERS * BOTRACELL-FACE * MARY REMOVAL * LASER ACNE TREATMENT * PERMANENT LASER HAIR REMOVAL * FACIAL * SKIN WHITENING *

Introducing... BOTRACELL

LOOK 5 YEARS YOUNGER IN JUST 30 MINUTES.

CALL OUR ONE - STOP SUPER CENTERS FOR FITNESS, SKIN, BODY AND FACE.

FITNESS HOTLINE: 536-3333
SKIN HOTLINE: 525-8771
MOBILE NUMBER: 091- SLIMMERS (75466377)

www.slimmersworld.com.ph * inquire@slimmersworld.com.ph

Spitz, once the star, upset over Beijing snub

HONG KONG—US SWIMming legend Mark Spitz won't be invited to Beijing if Michael Phelps breaks his record of seven gold medals at a single Olympics—because, he says, no one bothered to invite him.

Spitz said the International Olympic Committee, a US television network or Fi-nis—the international body that governs world swimming—should have brought him to the Olympic Games this year, with Phelps making a go at his record.

"I never got invited. You don't go to the Olympics just to watch. I'm going to go. Especially because of who I am," Spitz told Agence Presse-Presse in Hong Kong.

"I am going to sit there and watch Michael Phelps break my record unsuccessfully? That's almost insulting to me. It is not almost—it is."

Spitz became one of the most famous athletes in the world at the 1972 Munich Olympics, winning seven gold medals—with seven world records—in what many consider to be one of the greatest achievements in track and field.

Phelps is aiming to better that mark in Beijing, hoping to bring home eight golds.

And Spitz, now 58 and also thinks he could have won eight golds himself in Moscow if only he had had the chance.

"I was very, very pissed. If they had the 100m freestyle back then, which they do now, I probably would have won that too," he said.

Spitz, whose brief stint in show business in the 1970s never quite matched his success in the pool, said he attended the Athens Olympics four years ago...where Phelps also tried to break the record.

"They did not once put my face on television," he recalled. "But as soon as the swimming was over, and Michael Phelps didn't break any record, every year I went to beach volley, they put my face on the volleyballs."

Spitz said it would have been a great idea if he could be the one presenting the gold medals to Phelps, who has for years been candid about his ambitions to eclipse his mark of seven golds.

And Spitz thinks Phelps will succeed—for one very good reason.

"He's almost identical to me...He's a world-record holder in all those events, so he is dominating the events just like I did," Spitz said. "He reminds me of myself." AFP

AMERICAN swimming legend Mark Spitz, now 58 and without his trademark moustache, poses in Hong Kong under a picture of himself circa 1972 during the Munich Olympics where he won seven gold medals and broke seven world records. —AFP

JUMPSUIT of the Philippines comes in first in the men's 200-meter butterfly heats on Monday and breaks the Philippine record while his time of 1 minute and 59.27 seconds at the National Aquatics Center at the Beijing Games. —AFP

Phelps on track for Olympic gold dream

BEIJING—AMERICAN MICHAEL Phelps remains on track for eight gold medals in the Beijing Olympics after the United States on Monday won the 4x100-meter relay in record time.

Phelps has already won two golds, just six away from surpassing Mark Spitz's record of seven swimming golds at a single Olympics.

On Aug. 10, Phelps won the gold in the 400m individual medley in world record time 4:03.84. Phelps has rivals Laszlo Cseh and Ryan Lochte, and lowered the world record for the eighth time.

On Aug. 11, Phelps won another gold. In the 4x100m free relay. He joined an American record 0:47.51 on the "third" leg and another Jason Lezak record 0:46.06 for the United States hoped favorites France in a world record of 3:08.24.

Phelps has six remaining races.

+ 200m individual medley. He won the 200m Olympic gold in this event. He is currently the world champion in this race, having broken the same record at the US trials. His main challengers are US teammate Ryan Lochte and Hungary's Laszlo Cseh.

+ 200m butterfly. Phelps also won the 200m Olympic gold in this event. Again, he is currently the world champion and world record holder in this event. His main challengers include US teammate Gil Stovall and Czech Ioannis Drymonakos.

+ 200m freestyle. He won only the 200m Olympic bronze on a new course in Athens, but he has since claimed the world title and world record. His challengers include South African Roland Schoeman and US teammate Peter Vanderkaay.

+ 100m butterfly. Phelps won the 200m Olympic gold in this race. He is also currently the world champion in this race, having broken the same record at the US trials. His main challenger is Phelps at the Athens Olympic and the Melbourne world competitions.

+ 4x200m free relay. As a member of the US team, Phelps earned an Olympic gold in 2004 in this event. Defending champion United States will be challenged by Australia as well as Russian medalists Consolated European champion Italy.

+ 4x100m medley relay. As a member of the US team, Phelps won an Olympic gold in 2004 in this event with his appearances in the Athens team. The US team has never lost in this Olympic event.

Spitz won seven gold medals at the Munich Games in 1972—in the 100m and 200m freestyle, 100m and 200m butterfly, 4x100m freestyle, 4x200m freestyle and 4x100m medley. AFP

Phelps' gold quest: 2 down, 6 to go

For more, page A-2

won finished top on the winners of an unforgettable race.

"A lot of the times in the last Olympics, it wasn't possible to pull back two seconds on the final length when the guy I was racing was so far ahead," Lezak said.

"When I saw the last 50 turners and I saw Ian (Thorpe) was far ahead, I thought: No way. Then I thought: That's ridiculous, this is the Olympic Games. You have to go for it. That was all in the space of five seconds...I mean (that's) the if to 'can-do if' to 'done it,'" Lezak said.

Lezak was nearly slowly length behind the massive Bernard as they made the final turn, but the American bagged the last rope, drafting off the Frenchman and stunningly overtaking him on the very last stroke.

Watching on look, the 23-year-old Phelps thrust both arms toward the roof of the Water Cube, his quest to break Mark Spitz's record of seven gold medals having survived what will likely be his toughest test.

Scream for joy

A relieved Phelps screamed for joy amid wild celebrations on the US team where Fenner-Ind boasted about "smashing" in the buildup to the race.

"Jason (Lezak) had that race for us. He was not could even ask for," the casually cool Phelps said. "I was so fired up."

Bernard and his French team had looked on course to end Phelps' gold medal odyssey right there and there, but somehow Olympic journeymen Lezak pulled out something extra.

"I was going nuts," said Phelps, who swam the freefall leg. "As soon as (Lezak) came off that last wall, I started going crazy. We're a team. We went in as a team and now we're exiting as a team—and we're going out with that gold that we worked so hard for."

"I've never seen anything like that before," US coach Eddie Reese said. "Running down somebody who holds the world record and it is their game is incredible."

Sweet taste of success

The US victory may prove to be the pivotal moment in Phelps' drive for Olympic immortality. After winning six golds in Athens, Phelps needs only two more to have the most golds of any Olympian.

Not Lezak, however, it was a sweet taste of success when defeated him.

He had a bitter experience at the Athens Olympics, missing as a 100m freestyle medal contender but failing to advance from the heats. He was on the US 4x100-free squad that settled for bronze after Thorpe was the part of the US 4x100m free team that ended up with silver in freestyle in 2000—another memorable relay battle in which Australian great Ian Thorpe surged past Gary Hall on the final leg.

"I've been a part of the two winners in the last two Olympics that came out behind. I think I wanted it more than anybody but just for myself but to show that we are the nation to beat in that relay," Lezak said.

"To be honest with you I got really tired of losing ... I like silver not saving," he added.

"I was pretty pleased there were no minutes or no what. Jason reached the wall because (jumps) as high I almost fell in the pool," Jones said. "I couldn't contain myself, it was an amazing feeling."

French quartet

The French quartet of Amaury Leveaux, Fabien Gilot, Frederick Bousquet, and Bernard took the silver in 3:08.32.

"We believed in the gold medal and it's the end ... We lost by a few hundredths of a second, but life doesn't stop there," Bousquet said.

"That much inside the deliverance ... Experience prevailed over talent today and I regret that," he lamented.

To make things worse, Australian head coff swimmer Eamon Sullivan broke Bernard's 100m free world record with a time of 47.24 seconds. Australia took the bronze in 3:09.91.

The top five teams in the event were all under the world record of 3:11.23 set by a different 225 lineup to the heats on Sunday night.

"We know what we were capable of, but I am still in disbelief that we did what we did," Lezak said.

"All of us took to our jobs and took. The French are an amazing squad, and it's incredible we beat them."

The Americans had won the 4x100 freestyle relay at seven straight Olympics, but watched the Australians and South Africans take the gold at the last two Games. Reports from AFP AP and Reuters

Part of fireworks display faked?

For more, page A-2

of fours over five, aerial filming, the Daily Telegraph of London reported online on Monday, quoting Chinese organizers.

"So the ceremony got under way with a dramatic, drumbeat countdown, viewers watching at home and ecstatic viewers inside the Bird's Nest National Stadium watched as a series of giant footprints—55 in total—appeared to ground gloriously above the city from Tiananmen Square," according to telegraph.co.uk.

"What they did not realize was that what they were watching was in fact computer graphics, meticulously created over a period of months and inserted into the coverage electronically at exactly the right moments," it added.

The report said the fireworks were there for real, outside the stadium. But those responsible for filming the extravaganza decided in advance it would be impossible to capture the sequence—all 29 footprints—from the air.

"In a revolt, only the last [footprint], visible from the camera stands inside the Bird's Nest was captured on film," the report said, adding that the "trick" was earlier disclosed in a local Chinese newspaper, the Beijing Times, at the weekend.

The Telegraph quoted Guo Qingsheng, head of live aerial effects teams for the ceremony, as saying it took the team about a year to create the 55-second sequence.

Meticulous efforts

Meticulous efforts were made to ensure the sequence was as unnoticeable as possible. The visual effects team sought advice from the Beijing meteorological office as to how to overcome the hazy effects of fog. Fog's effect at night, and intervened a slight camera shake effect to simulate the idea that it was filmed from a helicopter.

"Seeing how it worked out, it was still a bit too bright compared to the actual fireworks," Guo said. "But most of the audience thought it was filmed live...so that was mission accomplished."

Guo said the main problem with trying to shoot the real thing was the difficulty of photo...the television helicopters at the right angle to see all 29 footprints in a row.

One advisor to the Beijing Olympic Committee defended the decision to use make-believe to impress the viewers.

"It would have been prohibitive to have tried to film it live," said the advisor, whom the report did not name. "We could not put the helicopter pilots at risk by making him try to follow the firework route."

Guo said he was worried that the technologically literate viewers who spotted the graphics might be retired, but reassured online enjoyment more admiration of the result.

The Telegraph noted that "although the event as a whole received rapturous reviews abroad, that has not been entirely by the same at home. Some Internet comments were hostile, saying that while it looked stunning the moment was vacuous."

A spokesperson for the Beijing Olympic Committee said the final decision had been made by Beijing Olympic Broadcasting, the joint venture between the International Olympic Committee and local organizers that is responsible for providing the main "feeds" of all Olympic events to viewers around the world.

"As far as we are concerned, we let all the fireworks—that's what's important to us," the spokesperson said.

52 Filipino drug 'mules' jailed in China

For more, page A-2

drug couriers has alarmed Philippine officials.

Former Sen. Vicente Sotto III, head of the Dangerous Drugs Board, said a "very worried" President Macapagal-Arroyo had instructed him to meet with Ms Ozaeta and Ms Arroyo's bilateral talks with Chinese President Hu Jintao.

"She could destroy the reputation of the many Filipinos in China who are decent people," he said.

Sotto said he was heading on the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) and China Cooperative Operations in Response to Dangerous Drugs (Accord) task force to establish better ties with China and in search illegal drug offenses. He said China was "very worry-free" in Asia.

The issue became the detained Filipinos were not discussed during Ms Arroyo's bilateral talks with Chinese President Hu Jintao.

In the 12 Filipinos on jail, 38 are women, and the two pregnant ones are set to be deported for humanitarian reasons, Sotto said. The average age of the detainees is 24 to 25, and most of them are professionals, he added.

The arrested Filipinos were not tried as illegal drug couriers as seemingly because they have admitted to their guilt, according to Sotto. Seven of them have been convicted by the lower courts.

"If I'm not mistaken, not a single one has claimed innocence. All admitted their guilt," he said.

Via Hong Kong, Macau

He said the Department of Foreign Affairs would see to it that the jailed Filipinos would get a fair trial, but would not like up the culprits for them for the wrong they have done.

"Of course, we don't wanna take such a thing in any country especially if Filipinos are involved. The President will never advocate anything that is contrary to the law of the land, especially in illegal drugs for that matter," Sotto said.

He said the arrested Filipinos had entered China from Hong Kong, Macau and Malaysia, and he suspected that the drugs had come from those areas. The Filipinos had used the entry points as Guangzhou, Shanghai and Beijing.

About 95 percent of the illegal drugs seized from the Filipinos were heroin, and the rest are methamphetamine hydrochloride (shabu), Sotto said. The Filipinos' fee for each delivery ranges from $1,000 to $1,500, and the maximum amount of drugs carried was 996 grams, while the biggest cans more than 3 kilos.

Visas about to expire

Sotto said the Filipinos having targeted appeared to be those whose visas were about to expire. These people are desperate, who usually work on tourist visas, and would resort to get out of China to apply for a new visa.

He suspected that there was a syndicate that supervises these Filipinos, offered to help them with a new visa, then would provide them with a plane ticket and additional money to bring in the drugs.

Of those arrested, nine have been fully paid because they were only given a down payment, with the rest of the money to be given once the mission is completed.

Decoys

"My worry is how they are convinced to go out of China and bring those drugs back into China by threatening syndicates," he said.

Sotto said he would look into the possibility that these Filipinos were being used as decoys to distract authorities from bigger drug shipments.

"I'm wondering why heroin from these countries being brought into China when there is heroin trafficking from this part of the world. So, it's puzzling. Maybe our count years are being used as decoys for bigger things. We're looking into that," he said.

Sotto said he would check the security arrangement at the airports in the country of origin of the drugs because the couriers had been able to slip past the authorities.

"These people should not have been able to get on the plane in the first place," he said.

Sotto also noted that Filipinos were not the only ones arrested for being drug mules.

However, majority of those caught are Filipinos. He said the drug syndicates did not think that Filipinos would be subjected to searching at airports.

Sotto implored Filipinos not to be enticed by offers of help in getting a visa and a few thousand dollars in exchange for becoming drug mules.

"When you're caught, you will be subjected to a long time in jail also lose the chance to earn more money for your families," he said.

12 AUGUST IS INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW (IHL) DAY!

THEME: "TOGETHER FOR HUMANITY, DIGNITY AND PEACE"

WHAT IS IHL?

- International humanitarian law (IHL) is a set of rules which place restrictions on the use of weapons and methods of warfare.
- It protects people who are not, or no longer participating in hostilities.
- IHL is one of the most powerful tools the international community has at its disposal to ensure the safety and dignity of people in times of war. It seeks to preserve a measure of humanity, with the guiding principle that even in war there are limits.

WHO DOES IHL PROTECT?

IHL protects those who are not, or no longer, participating in hostilities, such as:

- civilians;
- medical and religious military personnel;
- wounded, shipwrecked and sick combatants;
- prisoners of war.

Recognizing their specific needs, IHL grants women and children additional protection.

HOW DOES IHL PROTECT?

IHL prohibits or limits the use of weapons which are particularly cruel or which do not discriminate between combatants and civilians, or may expose the parties to a conflict to:

- distinguish between combatants and civilians, and to refrain from attacking civilians;
- care for the wounded and sick and protect medical personnel;
- ensure that the dignity of prisoners of war and civilian detainees is preserved by allowing visits by ICRC delegates.

MESSAGES

Warmest felicitations to the Philippine National Red Cross (PNRC), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the Department of National Defense (DND), and the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) as you spearhead the commemoration of the 70th Anniversary of the Signing of the 1949 Geneva Conventions.

The signing of the 1949 Geneva Conventions was a momentous occasion because it paved the way for promoting the humanitarian treatment of acts in times of war and conflict.

Because of this, the number of war has changed dramatically over the last century and the change is still continuing. But that led to a reduction in civilian casualties and war crimes as well as a growing awareness on the need to respect the lives and rights of civilians and combatants alike.

As we mark this historical milestone, with the theme, "Together for Humanity," I urge everybody to work together in preserving the legacy of the Geneva Conventions.

Through prevention and awareness campaigns, I am certain that we will be able to generate enough consciousness of the Principles of the International Humanitarian Law until all wars will live in peace and will no longer resort to violence in resolving conflicts.

Maraming Salamat Muli!

[signature]

GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO
President
Republic of the Philippines

We would like to greet our partners on this auspicious date when we celebrate IHL Day in the Philippines and the 70th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions. The delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) can trace his from literature to its partnership with national institutions, most notably the Philippine National Red Cross (PNRC), in disseminating International Humanitarian Law (IHL), its treatises of armed conflict. IHL is a binding law to be followed by belligerent, political authorities and civil society. IHL seeks to protect people who are not or no longer taking part in the hostilities and to restrict the methods and means of warfare employed.

The ICRC and its partners are committed with full promotion among armed forces, other weapon bearers, political authorities and civil society to encourage the adoption of legal norms, thus strengthening its implementation.

Being the guardian of IHL, the ICRC is an impartial, neutral and independent organization whose exclusively humanitarian mission is to protect the lives and dignity of victims of armed conflict and other situations of violence and to provide them with assistance.

Maraming salamat sa PNRC sa iba pang mga taong patuloy.

[signature]

HR. PETER MAURER
Head of delegation
International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

On this day, August 12, the Philippine National Red Cross (PNRC) joins the national observance of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) Day. This is an opportune time to be reminded that during wartime and in times of armed conflict, we must respect the principles of the Geneva Conventions that espouse the life and dignity of the individual.

As we too measures must be taken to ensure respect for the rights of those who are no longer actively participating in the armed conflict.

The escalating conflict in the southern part of the Philippines and other parts of the world drives the importance of IHL, even during these uncertain times. For this reason, the PNRC is working together with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to disseminate the basic principles of IHL to the general public and to ensure that the needs of the victims of armed conflict are attended to.

We encourage everyone to take part in today's observance of IHL Day and make a simple gesture of walking for humanity which can contribute to lasting peace for this country. Let us take this step forward and join the Red Cross in commemorating the event.

Mabuhay!

[signature]

DR. GWEN J. GORDON
Chairman and CEO
The Philippine National Red Cross

Nine years ago, Executive Order (EO) 114 issued by the President declared today, the 12th of August as the International Humanitarian Law (IHL) Day in observance of the Anniversary of the 1949 Geneva Conventions in which our country is one of the signatories. The Philippine National Red Cross (PNRC) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) view the event as an opportune time to celebrate IHL Day.

Today, the PNRC is the main advocate of IHL in the Philippines. However, must be taken to ensure respect for IHL and that the rights of those who are not actively participating in the armed conflict must be observed.

As Secretary General of the PNRC, I encourage everybody to do their part in celebrating this event. We in the PNRC will continue to spread the information on IHL and continue to expand help and alleviate human suffering in the context of armed conflict.

Come and join the Philippine National Red Cross, the International Committee of the Red Cross, different government agencies, non-government organizations and the academe in this celebration that will increase awareness and respect for the rights of individual.

[signature]

GERARDO M. ERGINA JR.
Secretary General
The Philippine National Red Cross

We join the whole country in celebrating International Humanitarian Law (IHL) Day – a day that serves to remember that humanity can and should be preserved even in the times of war and armed conflicts.

All Filipinos participate in the dissemination and observance of these rules and laws so as to save by members in the armed conflicts they are called. Let us add our efforts in persuasion the initiative efforts of our to find the creation of rule and conflicts.

We thank the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) as our partners and promoters of IHL. As victim of Executive Order 114 (EO), August 12 was declared as IHL Day to the country. Being its affiliate of the ICRC, the Philippine National Red Cross (PNRC) has designated the month of August as the International Humanitarian Law (IHL) month. IHL is also known as the law of war, which provides the rules that govern the conduct of the warring parties in times of war.

Let us step the hardships of war and join the Red Cross in commemorating this event.

Mabuhay!

[signature]

JOSEPH E. ESTRADA
Board of Governor and Chairman, IFRC
The Philippine National Red Cross

> "The Geneva Conventions... continue to remind us most forcefully of our common obligation to care for each other..."
>
> - Nelson Mandela

Activities for the Month of August 2008

Date	Province / City	Activity
August 10	Manila	Walk for Humanity @ Quirino Grandstand
August 10-12	Pasay City	2nd SEA Regional Forum on IHL @ Traders Hotel
August 12	Quezon City	Photo Exhibit @ DND Lobby
August 12	Kalaw-an, Cotabato	Run for Humanity
August 12	Catanduanes	Walk for Humanity
August 12	Quezon City	Legislative Forum @ the House of Representatives
August 13	Manila	Distinguished Lecture on IHL @ Court of Appeals
August 16	Digos City	Walk for Humanity
August 22	Baguio City	Walk for Humanity
August 23	La Union	Walk for Humanity
August 28	Pasay City	Armed Conflict & Specific Questions Relating to the Applicable National & Treaty Law @ the Philippine Senate
August 29	Nasua City	Walk for Humanity

ICRC

GMA resurrects Charter change

From page A1

decades of a separatist war in Mindanao.

"She is calling for a constitutional amendment ... in relation to lying about the Bangsamoro Juridical Entity," Bautista said, referring to the governing authority envisioned in a memorandum of agreement (MOA) on ancestral domain with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

The Supreme Court issued a temporary restraining order (TRO) on the Aug. 5 signing of the MOA in Malaysia following protests over the inclusion of 700 barangays in the enlarged Moro domain. The court has scheduled a formal hearing on the case on Friday.

During yesterday's effort in Malacañang, Ms Arroyo thanked the Swiss government for "its willingness to share in its experience of federalism."

She said that the business of Federalism at Fribourg in Switzerland was helping her administration "fine-tune studies on this form of government."

Ms Arroyo and Gonzalez-en agreed that this initiative would continue between the Swiss Institute and the Center for Local and Regional Governance of the University of the Philippines."

Critics of the MOA in the Senate and the House of Representatives have warned that the MOA was a vehicle to amend the Constitution and pushing the term of Ms Arroyo, which ends in rare years.

'Surgical amendment'

Last week, Malacañang officials told the Senate that what was needed to carry out the MOA was a "surgical amendment" and not a wholesale Charter change.

Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process Hermogenes Esperon Jr. and Dureza said then that that government negotiators had sought the advice of noted constitutionalist Fr. Joaquin Bernas in implementing the MOA.

But the two said much work should depend on the results of a planned plebiscite to be conducted in 12 months, and on negotiations on governance and disarmament of the MILF among other issues.

Under the plan, the Senate and the House of Representatives will pass a joint resolution adopting a one-item amendment of the Constitution.

The way forward

Executive Dureza told reporters that the government's plan to institute federalism ...

"An opportunity should be given to the whole country to avail of the reform effects of federalism. The sentiments of many people there is no give to our officials some authority in order to [enable] better And the federal set-up is the way forward in this," he said.

"The President has approved the way forward and there's no question about it. If she has the political will to do it she has to muster political will in spite of all those noises."

Congress refers to opposition in Congress to moves to amend the Constitution at this time. Critics say that the introduction of the federal system will mean wholesale changes in the Constitution, not piecemeal.

Asked whether the Arroyo administration would be able to move the country toward a federal-parliamentary system over a short haul, Dureza acknowledged that the preamble had been set back because of the Supreme Court's intervention last week.

Set up building blocks

"The preamble is come up with signing, go to Congress for wedding law, a plebiscite is held. When you discuss issue of governance, then a final consultation, final peace agreement can be signed," Dureza said.

"That is where after you sign the compact, you have to move onward amending portions of the charter to implement or carry out the terms of the MOA on ARI and final peace agreement that will come," he said.

Bautista said that the government would try its best to achieve the amendment but at least it had "set up the building blocks."

Asked whether this bid for Charter change would ensure yet another political controversy, Dureza said this cannot be avoided in a country with a "lively democracy."

MOA to be signed soon

During a meeting yesterday at the House of Representatives, Esperon announced that the government was confident that the MOA would be signed before the end of the month, according to Cagayan de Oro Rep. Rufus Rodriguez.

More than 20 lawmakers, mostly from Mindanao, who attended the meeting dismissed that the government scrap the MOA, citing the lack of transparency in the crafting of the document, said Rodriguez.

Also yesterday, leaders of the Liberal Party and the United Opposition filed petitions urging the Supreme Court to scrap the controversial deal with the MILF.

Sen. Mar Roxas, LP president, echoed in his 20-page petition the concerns of the original petitioners in the case—North Cotabato and Zamboanga City sources—that the MOA was prepared and finalized without public consultations.

A product of deceit

Roxas said that the MOA was "undemocratic" and was "a product of deceit and betrayal."

Former Sen. Franklin Drilon, LP national chair, and 1SG spokesperson Adel Tamano warned the Supreme Court that its countenance the MOA would create a "dangerous precedent."

Sen. Pontio Pimentel, civil society group announced they will join a rally today at the capitol to oppose the inclusion of the towns of Barbaloc and Buenavista in southern Palawan in the expanded Moro homeland. *With reports from Christine N. Avendaño, Jerome Aning and Rosemarie Arnaiz, Inquirer Researchers Lira Lazo*

Moro rebels stand ground; Air Force bombs hideouts

From page A1

the murders, the military said.

The Armed Forces deputy chief of staff, Lt. Gen. Cardozo Luna, claimed government forces had "liberated" seven barangays but the guerrillas—who are estimated to number 1,200 members—continued to resist elsewhere.

In Cotabato, South Cotabato Rep. Darlene Antonino-Custodio said she had received "credible reports" that the MILF was offering cash deals as P15,000 and identification cards to prospective recruits in her district.

Speaking on reporters in Camp Aguinaldo by phone, Luna said there were fighting both on land and in the air since the rebels had refused to cease hostilities because the roads and bridges were flooded.

"They are realizing latterly. They would like to make it firm to themselves that they should [have] done back," Luna said.

But Luna was confident the military could end the conflict "before about 500 would "not last." He expressed doubts about their ability to replenish their supplies, inducing ammunition.

"We want to resolve this as early as possible. We don't want to create days ... We aren't give a dead line. The earlier we finish this, the better," Luna said.

Rebels digging in

Fighting over several days has so far resulted in 13 dead, according to reports from military and local officials. They included nine soldiers, two militiamen, three civilians and seven rebels. Witnesses earlier said they saw three soldiers dead in one area but the toll was not confirmed.

"The fighting has been tremendous. My report there is held Dole ground," Lt. Dimlo de Carmen, commander of the 40th Infantry Battalion in North Cotabato, told reporters.

Luna said Rebel villages in Mukaayan, Dasiling and Dangcagan in Kidapawan, Kabacan, in Pikit and three villages in Pigcawayan town "were threatened already but were still being cleared of possible booby-traps."

North Cotabato Gov. Jesse Sacdalan said rebels some areas were considered liberated, clashes broke out in other villages, such as in Talitapan and Balungaoan, in Pikit town.

Highway occupied

Sacdalan said the fighting in Pikit ended after a rebel band occupied portions of the Cotabato-Davao highway and fanned out in the area.

Samad Ampatuan, 27, a bus passenger, and about 10 gunmen blocked their vehicle and ordered the driver out as passed.

"One bus attempted to proceed but was fired upon by the rebels," she said.

"The exchange of gunfire has placed Cotabato-Davao highway perilous to motorists," Luna said, adding the military had shut down traffic in the portion of highway where skirmishes were taking place.

Air strikes called in

Maj. Randolph Cabangbang, spokesperson of the Eastern Mindanao Command (Eastmincom), said the military again launched air strikes in Datu Piang the rebels occupying areas of Talayan and Buliangan.

"Our troops on the ground asked for the air support to deter many the rebels because they were too near the highway" he said.

Luna is the day soldiers and policemen on armored personnel carriers escorted at least eight buses through the highway.

Luna said unless the highway was cleared of the rebels, no traffic would be allowed on the Talayan and Dalingasan provinces.

Emergency meeting

Ghazali Jaafar, MILF political affairs chief, said the tensions by phone that members of the executive committee, including the Malaysian-led International monitoring team, held an emergency meeting to try and resolve the crisis.

"We are not going to run. We are giving primacy to the peace talks," Jaafar said.

He said it appeared there was only waiting for the deployment of the Joint Monitoring Action Team (JMAT) of peacekeepers before withdrawing completely.

JMT members said an attack helicopter dropped rockets and bombs on rebel positions in a residential 20-25mg hours of air strikes, according to a source of theirs, who asked not to be identified because of the sensitive nature of the information.

Helicopter, OV-10 Bronco, 105-520 attack helicopters and 105-260 propeller planes delivered 30 rockets and 200-pound and 500-pound bombs on suspected MILF positions.

Mounted 50-cal. machine guns also fired several rounds to clear the runways, said the rebel in a late afternoon update.

He said there had yet to be "an official report of casualties/damages incurred against the enemies."

MILF flags hoisted

Bolstering its power in Mindanao, the MILF also sent additional bomber planes and night-capable helicopters to North Cotabato yesterday.

The 15th Strike Wing to Sangley (Cavite), sent two more OV-10 Bronco bombers to the hub de zona while the 205th Tactical Helicopter Wing in Huron sent two additional night-capable UH-1H choppers to augment four choppers already on site.

The night-capable Hueys are each equipped for bombing missions but may undertake night-time troop transport, reconnaissance, supply and reconnaissance.

In a press conference in Manila, North Cotabato Vice Governor Emmanuel Pinol said MILF guerrillas in some parts of his province were seen raising their flags.

"Initially, we did not pay attention to these flags. Now, we have been provided that as a prelude to their declaration of independence...and self-reliance," he said.

Pinol called for the creation of a commission composed of various Mindanao stakeholders to review the stalled peace agreement peace deal with the MILF calling for the establishment of an independent Bangsamoro homeland in the south.

Antonino said the reported MILF recruitment was taking place in areas where the government has no presence.

"[Financial recruits] are being given P3'i and being offered P10,000 ... I believe these are credible reports at this point. I'm having them verified," she said. *Reports from Edwin Bernardino, Charlie Sabate, Jaspher Misiron and Ruth Mendoza, Inquirer Mindanao, and Norman Bordadora in Manila*

130,000 villagers flee fighting in North Cotabato

From page A1

ing carried out by a special task Force to eject MILF guerrillas in the areas they had occupied in five North Cotabato towns were intended to enable all evacuees to return to their homes.

"It didn't get better, it got worse, unfortunately for the locals. Some have not even yet had to respond in the problems that surfaced," Datuscud.

Glenn Rabonza, executive director of the National Disaster Coordinating Council, said 129,819 residents had been displaced from the towns of Aleosan, Midsayap, Pikit, Tulunan and Libungan.

He said a total of 77,308 residents were remained in 43 evacuation centers while the rest were staying at places not safe evacuation centers or with relatives.

The evacuees came from a total of 42 barangays. The evacuation began on Aug. 1.

'We're not safe anymore'

Among those who have decided to pack up and go was Lerion Gedorme, 48, of Barangay Tukucan in Pikit. She is taking her three children to Kidapawan City.

"We are not safe here anymore," she said. "We learned that our father's neighbor was killed last night. His body remains in the field where there are MILF rebels."

Hilling Alabado, a resident of Midsayap town, said she still feared for her family's safety even if they were far away from the areas of fighting.

"Our relatives in Cumuga, Libungan town, have also started packing as they are hiring something such them once the rebels come," Alabado said.

Lives disrupted

Mitsuing Blue Bishop, 65, of Tboliflan, Pikit, area said that the resurgence of violence had disrupted the lives of Christians and Muslims who used to live side by side in her hometown.

"I wish this never happened," she said. "I wish we can still be friends as we have been in all the years since we were kindmates in school."

"Most of us in Pikit were elementary from way back then. Some of our children have even married each other," she lamented.

Gumitalaon on Human Rights Chair Leila de Lima said she was deploying a 10-member special team in the areas to look on the plight of families displaced by the fighting.

De Lima's concern

De Lima said she formed the team after receiving information from non-government agencies that some of the families had started building disaster along roads because they could no longer be accommodated in evacuation centers.

"The commission's immediate concern are the internally displaced people and those outside the evacuation centers, as are will closely monitor them," she said.

De Lima reminded government agencies against election violations following reports that Muslim evacuees were receiving the least priority when it came to food supplies distributed by local government units.

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) has released P245,400 worth of food packs, plastic mats, canned goods and bottled waters to the evacuees.

Special team

De Lima appointed Commissioner Nieves Victoria Cardoza to lead the special team composed of lawyers, doctors and CHR investigators.

The special team will document possible human rights violations against evacuees and coordinate with local officials and private agencies to ensure the victims were taken care of.

De Lima appealed to the Department of Education to open classrooms to families that cannot be housed in evacuation centers.

She reminded that the CHR's prior position that the lack of consultation with stakeholders on the agreement seeking to establish an expanded Bangsamoro homeland violated the people's rights to information.

De Lima was referring to the stalled peace deal between the government and the rebels calling for an expanded autonomous region mixed with wide political and economic powers.

"The commission questions the process by which it was negotiated, decided and reached," a CHR advisory said. "The government cannot ... hide behind the cloak of executive privilege to summarize in secret into in the guise of national security."

Lagdameo: 'Be generous'

Archbishop Angel Lagdameo, president of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP), appealed to the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) to end the hostilities for the sake of the thousands of affected civilians.

Lagdameo said both sides should return to the negotiating table and craft an agreement that would lead to lasting peace.

"For both sides, the government and the MILF, I appeal that they be generous in such either so that there is peace and order," Lagdameo said over the Catholic Church-run Radio Veritas.

Lagdameo said the people of Mindanao inevitably bore the brunt of war.

"The poor people are dislocated from their homes. I hope that peace will reign from both sides," Lagdameo said. *With reports from Jocelyn R. Uy and Krizette L. Abesa*

A resident of Barangay Balisi in Midsayap, North Cotabato, takes water as fighting is the area comes closer to their homes. AGUSAN MOTOBOAT CLUB

Fil-Ams urge Pelosi to put vet bill to vote

By Cynthia D. Balana

FILIPINO-AMERICAN GROUPS IN THE United States have asked Speaker Nancy Pelosi to send a bill providing financial benefits to some 18,000 Filipino veterans of World War II to a floor vote before Congress goes on recess next month.

In a letter to Pelosi, the National Federation of Filipino American Associations (NaFFAA), through its chair Alma Ilova, urged the leadership of the US House of Representatives to act decisively on House Resolution 760, the Filipino Veterans Equity Act, saying "now more than ever, we need your leadership to see that this historic measure is passed."

Ilova cited the growing frustration among grassroots supporters over the perceived inaction by the House.

She said the Filipino-American community was doing its best to enlist more supporters for the measure.

"We remain confident a bipartisan consensus will prevail," she said, adding that Filipinos were among the first to heed the call of their US President Franklin D. Roosevelt to join the fight for world peace under the American flag.

"Our veterans and our community look to your leadership to seize this historic moment and make good America's promise to these veterans," Ilova told Pelosi.

Senators Daniel Inouye and Theodore Stevens, who supported the bill in the Senate, had assured President Macapagal-Arroyo during their visit to Manila in January that they would lead congressional efforts toward passage of the bill.

Inouye, himself a WWII veteran, sponsored the bill to acknowledge the significant contributions of Filipino veterans who helped ensure the victory of US forces in the Pacific.

After more than 60 years, Senate Bill 1315, otherwise known as the veterans' bill, was finally passed by the US Senate on April 24. It contains provisions recognizing the invaluable and heroic services of Filipino veterans in World War II.

Under the bill, all eligible Filipino veterans who are living in the United States will receive full benefits just like their US counterparts. Those residing in the Philippines will receive monthly pensions of $371 for enlisted veterans, $300 for single widows and $200 for surviving spouses.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, August 12, 2008
19th Week in Ordinary Time
1st Reading: Ezk 2:8-3:4
Gospel: Mt 18:1-5, 10, 12-14
The disciples came to Jesus and asked him, "Who is the greatest in the Kingdom of heaven?"

Then Jesus called a little child, set the child in the midst of the disciples, and said, "I assure you that you must change and become like little children, you can not enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever becomes lowly like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven, and whoever receives such a child in my name receives me.

"But that one do not despise one of these little ones, for I tell you, their angels in heaven continually see the face of my heavenly Father.

"What do you think of this? If someone has a hundred sheep and one of them strays, won't he leave the ninety-nine on the hillsides, and go to look for the stray one? And if he finds it, I assure he really finds it, he is more pleased about it than about the ninety-nine that did not get lost. It is the same with your Father in heaven: there they don't want even one of these little ones to be lost."

Commentary:
Who is the least among? Is it not you? Is it not me?

Jesus loves you so much that He is willing to spend endless hours, even His entire earthly life so that you might be rescued from the dangers of sin and death, and so that you might be brought back to the safety like the good shepherd in the parable. The Lord does care for you, and when He finds you He lifts you up on His shoulders and rejoices that you have been found.

Such is the love of the Good Shepherd for you. With this crucified He weekend pictures of everlasting life.

Christian Communications Foundation, Inc. | Registered to 3/F Village Midtown Square, Sgt. Cpl. P.S. Bn. # 0123647 | Tel. 8911-0000, 8911-0000 | Fax: 8911-0000 | E-mail: info@ccfi.org | Website: http://www.DailyGospel.com | Electronic Publications & http://christianpublications.org | Publication #0000000000 | Copyright 2008 CCFI | Author: JOHN CENTER | Author: Publication Name: 1943 Jesus Blvd., Apostle Heights, Cebu City, 0000 | Publication Email: Publication@Publication.com

idec
Split Type Wall Mounted Aircon
1hp-P16,500
Floor Mounted-3hp-P35,500, 5hp-P55,000
Free Installation!

Most Complete Line of Cleaning Equipment
P3,700
P39,500
ORIGINAL EQUIPMENT for CARWASH BUSINESS
WARRANTY COMMERCIAL

mobile news

Hear more.
Sountex
Call 887-1918 today

SAINT MARY'S College of San Jose
NURSING

721-6038 to 39

Cooler than an electric fan, less power consumed than an airconditioner.
hiCOOL
Get comfort from the heat without having to buy a new airconditioner.
Features
Exclusively distributed by Asiedi Progress
1 Year Warranty on parts and service

EXCELLENCE
people demand
WEXAN PIPELINE
THE VENUES FOR THE 2008 BEIJING OLYMPICS
OTHMANN INC.

The heart of Asia's Electronics Design, Technology and Manufacturing
Be Seen. Be Connected. Be Online.
FRONTECS
Network with more than 15,000 industry professionals
Event Highlights
Technology Forums

INQUIRER
VOL. 27 NO. 249
OPINION

Doing a Nero

EDITORIAL

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO MAY BE ACquiring a reputation for being the Nero of the Philippines. Nero, as every high school student knows, was the Roman emperor who is said to have fiddled while Rome burned. (Historical note: In 67 AD, while Nero was visiting Greece, crucible broke out throughout the Roman Empire, partly because of his extravagance, partly because of his unacceptable behavior and partly because of his mismanagement of the empire.)

Ms Arroyo went gallivanting with a large entourage on a working visit to the United States even while Typhoon "Frank" was battering a large section of the Visayas, killing 557 people, displacing 4 million and destroying P13.5 billion worth of public works, crops and private property. The typhoon also sank the Sulpicio Lines' MV Princess of the Stars, killing more than 800 passengers and crew.

She said then that she could not cancel the US visit as to do so would embarrass the country. But was it not more embarrassing to see the leader of the country enjoying herself abroad while hundreds of her countrymen were dying and hundreds of thousands were suffering from the devastating effects of the strong typhoon?

Last week, a big part of Mindanao was threatening to erupt in flames over the very questionable Memorandum of Agreement on the creation of the Bangsamoro Juridical Entity concluded by the Arroyo administration, and yet Ms Arroyo did not stay at home and instead left for the Olympic Games in Beijing.

Let's grant that she wanted to be one of the 88 heads of state or the Olympics opening, but she could have returned immediately after the opening ceremonies to attend to the serious situation in Mindanao. Instead she stayed for three more days, to attend a luncheon given by China's President Hu Jintao, to meet with some of the other heads of state and to stand in attention at the signing of a $150-million private deal between a Chinese firm and two Filipino corporations headed by her former chief of staff, Michael Defensor. What was so urgent about these things that she had to stay in China instead of hurrying back home to try to prevent a conflagration threatening to engulf a great part of Mindanao?

On a personal level, she also did a Nero when she left the backside of her son, Jose Miguel Arroyo, while he was succeeding from a life-threatening surgery, to be in China just to witness the signing of the $329-million ZTE-NBN deal. Right after the signing, the copies of the agreement were reported missing. It was only after the Senate began looking into the questionable transactions that a "reconstituted" copy of the agreement surfaced. Later developments tended to show that the deal was tainted with graft, and Ms Arroyo had no choice but to short it.

Ms Arroyo is the most widely traveled president the country has ever had, having been, at last count, to 20 countries. On her trips abroad she would often bring members of her family and scores of congressmen and local government officials whom she wanted to reward for their loyalty. In the process, she spent millions of dollars of taxpayers' money.

In the last two years of her term, she has to modernize her wardrobe. Government funds are needed for important programs and services, and there are many urgent matters that have to be attended to by a President in Malacañang.

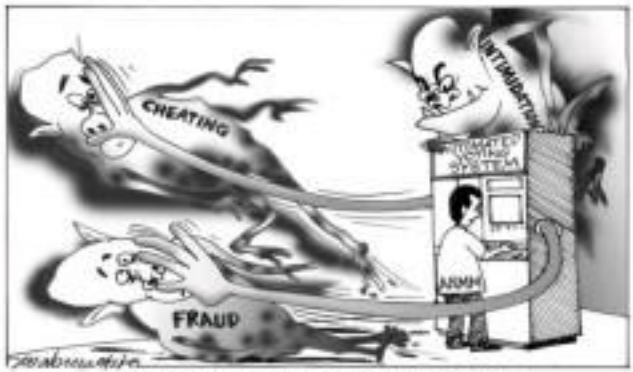
Ms Arroyo cannot be a Nero most of the time, fiddling or attending to less important matters while the fate of the nation hangs in the balance. The threatened conflict in Mindanao can result either in the dismemberment of the country or in a bigger, more deadly and more devastating conflict than the war in the 1970s and 1980s when tens of thousands of soldiers, Moro rebels and civilians died and hundreds of thousands of others were displaced or left homeless.

Ms Arroyo, after watching "the greatest show on earth" that was the opening of the Olympic Games, after having fun hobnobbing with other heads of state in Beijing, and after unfortunately standing in solemn and hovering close by like a watcher hero at her favorite tourists at the signing of a private agreement, can now attend to more serious matters.

First, she has to tell the nation the whole truth about the so-called Bangsamoro Juridical Entity. Second, she has to assure the nation in clear unequivocal terms that she will not resort to any subterfuge, including the scoring up of the RA, to prolong her stay in Malacañang beyond 2010. She can stop fiddling around, stay put in Manila and be honest with the nation for once.

Publisher Isaac Tunay
Editor in Chief Letty Jacinto-Magsanoc
Managing Editor Jose Ma. A. Nolasco
Associate Editor Melquiades S. Gunigan
Associate Editor for Media Orly Vitaliano A. Ganzon
Opinion Editor Jose V. Abueva
News Editor Antonio T. Enriquez Jr. • Chief, Sun.Star Operations Noel B. Pascual
Chief, News Desk Jose G. Aguavino
National Editor Francisco S. Tatad Jr.
Senior Desk Editor Jaime V. Sarmiento Jr.
Associate Editors Antonio Zumel
Photojournalist Edwin U. Tuminello
Art & Design Director Lisbeth R. Palabrica
Board Chairman Maker R. Philo
President Alexander Prieto Arrieta
Senior Vice President for Sales and Marketing Renato B. Ramirez
VP for Advertising Felipe B. Gozon
AVP for Circulation Isaac Sison R. Tan

All rights reserved.



Beating plowshares into swords

VIEWPOINT

Joaquin L. Mercado

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO MAY BE what her rabid critics make she is. But the lady is not dumb. She knows the death of promoting the creation of the Bangsamoro Juridical Entity was finally floated. Then why did she shuffle the deck, proposed to Ebrahim Murad as head of the brood?

A quarter-to-midnight Supreme Court temporary restraining order detailed the signing of the Memorandum of Agreement. By then, diplomats were in Kuala Lumpur to entrench the agreement. Was this what John Reinhold Niebuhr called "the ingenuity of lunacy"?

Malacañang never officially released the MOA, claiming "executive privilege." This bloodlolled existence no matter. But what the leaked texts indicate, as former Sen. Franklin Drilon claims, could be the "impeachable chop-chop of the century."

Without even a by your leave, eight of every 10 residents in Iligan City, Ms Arroyo's old hometown, for example, would be swept into the BJE—and become under the Sharia Court 711 barangays, from Palawan to the Zamboanga Peninsula, are in a similar fix.

The plan expands The present Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao to places whose inhabitants never had any inkling that they could be part of a mutually new state," as equally startled lawyers noted. The backlash to this graft-on-the-side may have been underestimated factors.

Three scholars (beyond reformers all, unbelievably) have been given very important appointments to gift powers reserved only for sovereign states on BJE.

University of the Philippines' Raul Pangalangan notes that the conduct of foreign relations, a separate financial system and even sovereign control over "territorial sea" (the land of water within 12 nautical miles of the coastline) would be given away.

The MOA accepts the "Bangsamoro as a separate state, with full and expressed preference to their "ancestral domain." Associate Justice Supreme Court Justice Isagani Cruz, who also polemicist out that the MILF is only a rebel group like local communists, they haven't won recognition as a "belligerent community."

The MOA seeks to overhaul the Organic Act which established the ARMM. Associate Joaquin Bernas notes. "These cannot be achieved by a mere MOA. Implementation requires amending the Organic Act, even the Constitution." But the document seems devoid of provisions to make the Constitution.

So what? scoops Chadbourn Andres. MILF was there for political affairs. "We don't recognize the Constitution."

Beyond that second brute, the historical fact is that 20,116,000 observers cast their ballots in the Feb. 2, 1987 referendum on the Constitution. The "yes" votes swamped the "no" votes three to one. Of this total, 17,000,491 voted "yes" and 1,650,714 cast a "no" vote. Over 800,000 of those votes came from Muslim Mindanao. Thus, the Constitution came into effect on Feb. 11 of that year.

The BJE hasn't even bothered with a Bill of Rights, leaving women open to abuse. Makati Rep. Teodoro Locsin Jr. has noted. But Fr. Joaquin Bernas, constitutional expert, explains that the Constitution extends Bill of Rights to Muslims and local communities belatedly discovered that urban they tried to peddle jamu (a palliatives stuff) sale for 1,000 days. They were auctioned into oblivion.

"In prayer, sons bury their fathers," Guerrero says, learned. "But in war, fathers bury their sons."

The new 220,000 here lost in Mindanao conflicts since in this truth. Violence is unpredictable. Mindanao is not a war zone. Ilagay ending casualties are not only Muslims but Christians, Iamadis or Buddhists and others victimize giving the Bagsik peace process a chance to take root.

The late Pope John Paul II urged use of the negotiating table for the Mindanao problem. This commitment to non-violence reminders in the will of Mindanao leaders like archbishops Orlando Quevedo and Antonio Ledesma, SJ. for continued dialogue. Such an Implacable Muslim government and equally rabid rights of non-Muslims.

But ignoring people's aspirations, whether expressed in consciousness or unconscious, and keeping stakeholders in the dark, as the Arroyo regime has been doing, only widens the chasm to abyss. This artificial disturbances two rounds.

"Ms Arroyo's support ... of this plan seeks to consolidate her own hold on power," writes Johns Hopkins University professor Boris Locker in a Wall Street Journal analysis. Tapping Muslim autonomy requires constitutional changes. And while the MOA would flush the executive, it opens a door to extending presidential terms or federalism. This is a "perfect storm" for her drive to cling to power.

Filipinos are not stupid, however. "Ms Arroyo really has her hands tied because there are more than one million Filipino hostages to OFWs in Muslim countries," e-mails Michael Avila from Australia. "Any drastic move could threaten their safety and livelihood."

"Malaysia sees her interest in Moro carving out an Islamic state in Mindanao. A strong Philippines would be a bane. This makes enough sense to me. To prevent this, they will weaken in any way they can," he adds.

The Arroyo regime has to throw the garden path by factoring Section 7 of the Bill of Rights, which says, "The right of the people to information on matters of public concern shall be recognized." To prevent a repetition of this MOA debacle, Congress should approve as soon as possible a freedom of information law.

"I've not become the King's First Minister to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire," Winston Churchill declared in 1936. In 2008, can President Arroyo say, "I'm not presiding over the liquidation of the domain of what Manuel called massive juvenile delay"?

(E-mail: kerrbear-mail@gmail.com)

'Moro-moro'

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

BY APOLOGIES TO MOROS, BUT I HAVE only one term for the opening spat between chief peace negotiator Hermogenes Esperon and Sixth Coabom Tan Gov. Emmanuel Piñol. I mean moro-moro.

Their spat is, as everybody knows by now, came from Esperon apparently telling Piñol that if the Supreme Court blocked the signing of the Memorandum of Agreement, as Piñol, Cebu Lawmaker and others were demanding, Esperon would not be responsible for what happens next. Upon finally, Esperon told Piñol, "We are not going to sacrifice the lives of our soldiers to defend you." That infuriated Piñol, who vowed his opposition to the MOA even more.

There is nothing more moro about Piñol's anger if you consider that you have over a million investors into your province by people your benefactors had taken pains to paint as kidnappers and brutalizers (Malacañang has always treated the MILF is just the other face of the Abu Sayyaf, you would be very, very pissed off, too. If you were he and you just had the nasty surprise sprung on you of being the elected vice governor of a Philippine province one day and the tolerated headman of the Bangsamoro homeland the next, you would go amok, too.

Piñol has nope and therefore no real enough. What makes his cliff with Esperon a more moro are two things.

One is that it draws attention away from the real problem with the MOA. The problem is not whether the MILF deserves a Bangsamoro homeland or not, or whether the province should be part of it. The problem is whether Esperon and his boss should be hanged or not, and in which tree, for giving it. The problem is not whether the granting of a homeland to the MILF is the way to present or not. The problem is whether government has the right or power to grant it or not.

The charity and enormity with which the Supreme Court struck down the MOA clearly shows it does not. Any seven mind the Court. The judge of paint with which the people greeted the MOA also suggest that the MOA is dead. It is not being treated as a suspect party but being unified in the back. The notion that the MOA is not final since government will still have to pass the enabling law through Congress is laughable. It is to ebook. It is like giving away something that isn't yours and selling the owner, "Don't worry, I'll seal your permission later."

Two Mindanao archbishops, Orlando Quevedo and Antonio Ledesma, say there's nothing to discuss with the MOA. "The MOA is," says Quevedo, "need not be the document that should contain all the details that would resolve all questions and doubts. The power you own will continue even after it is signed. With goodwill, patience and wisdom ... and consultation ... such further steps will surely resolve arising questions."

He misses the point. I myself have no problem with the Moros having a homeland. But that is not for GMA or Esperon to give, that is for the Filipino people to give. The people who need to be consulted aren't just the residents of the places the MOA includes in Bangsamoro, they are the residents of the rest of the country, too. They're the owners of the land.

The MOA puts the cart before the horse. Or more accurately, it puts a gun to the Filipinos' heads and tells them that if they do not go along with it, they will have a war on their hands. That was exactly what Esperon threatened Piñol with. And as if on cue, the MILF started issuing threats—as they usually do before talks, spokesmen—and pounded war drums at his doorstep. Goodwill, patience, wisdom and consultation are all very well, but those are the very things the MOA does not have.

You want an agreement that hears the merits of the case, that considers the wishes of all parties, first consult the Filipino people, solving on their infinite wisdom, while asking the Moros to show goodwill by exercising patience. Filipinos are not innately stupid, even if they often show otherwise. Given a convincing argument, they can be persuaded to approve something that redounds to their benefit. There—and only there—are you forge a meaningful agreement, one that has the backing of the country, and which the world may then be called upon to witness. Not before.

You forge an MOA without that process, in which the MILF is the only party accepting fastively in the dark, you can be sure it will reflect ill will, impatience, folly and administration. That is not the way to peace, that is the way to war.

Which brings me to the second thing that makes the Esperon-Piñol spat a comic matter. It was almost inevitable that the two villains of the piece accept the one who engineered the MOA in the first place. That is not Esperon. That is GMA.

Who should Piñol confine his attacks to Esperon? Who should he have confined his other war epithalamium (villains and problems in front mud runs and cause pogroms), but he did see earlier this "peace"—for how did Esperon may have threatened to leave Piñol to his devices, but it was not he who gave the MILF new MOA. It was not he who gave the MILF a say his lives. Piñol's disease on GMA is deafening.

Is it really peace we see that the MOA means to bring to Muslim Mindanao? Before the MOA, everything was like Christmas for them, the resources was missing, not even a mouse. To cite Arroyo's own words, rewards are unscathed. The Muslims are blaming the Christians for refusing to abide by something their government has promised them without their consent. And the Christians are furious that the Muslims would dismember the country. Internal is a done deal and are moving even more to "reclaim" their lost land. All it takes is a spark to set that land ablaze all over again.

Ask yourself: Who created that situation?

Saving the Arroyo-morro of old, neither the Moros nor the Christians want, only the Spanish colonial government did.

They gave to rule this country for centuries.

China's debut

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

FOR ONE BRIEF SHINING MOMENT LAST AUGUST 8, the whole world (perhaps even the Beijing fields rolling into Mongolia) seemed to stop to watch the opening of the much-hallooed 29th Summer Olympics in Beijing. And the Chinese Olympic authorities did not disappoint the world. From the pomp and pageantry of the traditional opening day parade in the ceremonial Bird's Nest, the magnificent nonstop of entertaining medals from first two-part choir splendor as millions of fireworks lit up the dazzling evening sky.

For more sensational was the kowtow spirit with which the Chinese people tackled all odds to hold the Olympics, beginning with the inauguration of 9 billion earthquakes to the heat that ravaged their country and other environmental problems. Human rights violations also had to be overcome in order to entice their international coming out party.

* * *

Now here has shifted to the race between the United States and China for the biggest haul of gold medals in the Olympics. Right now, the host has been the goal of the Chinese, and in fifteen less years ago it became an obsession. Last January, we joined the delegation of then Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. to Beijing and Shanghai. We left before and even then the Chinese were open about this obsession. I saw the other day a CNN feature that showed how very young Chinese children were recruited for sports training. The children's bodies were put through a rigorous training regimen, probably from pain and exhaustion, but the training went on. Sports is just one arena where the Chinese demonstrate their competitive spirit (another is economic supremacy—in China alone, it became the biggest economy in the time history). It's both awesome and frightening.

* * *

As fighting between government forces and the MILF continues in Mindanao, there are many people who continue to wish that peace will prevail in Mindanao and are truly concerned with the fate of the suspended peace process.

* * *

What people fail to see is that the country won't prosper unless peace becomes a reality, especially in Mindanao. Armed hostilities between the government and the MNLF, which began in the 1970s, and which basically is a splinter group, the MILF in 1977, has resulted in much havoc on the economy and the economy. According to a picture on the ISDA, the defense department puts the cost of war in Mindanao from 1970 to 1996 at P73 billion. The ADB, Philippine Human Development Report places the cost of the Mindanao conflict from 1970 to 2001 at between P5 billion and P15 billion a year, and the World Bank at P30 million daily or P10 billion each year. From 1970 to 1996 alone, 120,000 lives were lost there (150 persons since 2000) 30 percent GDP and 25 percent civilians) and 1.1 million persons were displaced from 2000 to 2003. These data do not include the cost of foreign investments or the cost against the IMF.

* * *

In the light of such tragic fratricidal wars, it's good that enough people are speaking out in support of efforts to end violence, among them Archbishop Orlando Quevedo of Cotabato City and Antonio Ledesma, S.J., formerly of IpO and now Cagayan de Oro. These two prelates know the score as they have been serving in the midst of the conflict for many years. Archbishop Quevedo of ISDA as "a very serious attempt to balance national sovereignty and Bangsamoro aspirations for self-determination and freedom," while Ledesma spoke of criticism that it's only now that the Supreme Court has put on hearing oral arguments on the petition. "The consultations have been taking place for years, even before Ismael Kapunan," he said. Note that after a final peace settlement with the MNLF, there was a three-year consultation with the MILF began the following year.

There are no perfect negotiations. The Northern Ireland negotiations took decades and were marred by countless stalemates, but they led to the end of the Irish Republican Army. We shouldn't be discouraged by the imperfections of the peace process but instead contribute constructive criticisms that will help it.

* * *

THE ISDAFI and a representative from Pro-Life Philippines put up a spirited defense, or maybe we should call it an offense, against the draft bills. But it seems the risks—of scientific ignorance, demographic data, field experience and legal issues—are on the losing side.

Like the waning criticisms what the "blind" population growth rate was for the Philippines, given the demands and pressures on resources and "carrying capacity." Miss Nemenzo of the Commission on Population said the government has already set a target of 1.91 percent PGR by 2010, although at present we are still around 2.04 percent PGR.

But it's time we looked beyond numbers and theory and turned and looked at the reality on the ground. The Church has all the right to preach what it wants, but beyond dominating Senate committee hearings, it has to do the dismantling—living amid her parishioners with as they see it.

Talk on sex and population at the Senate

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

AT THE HEARING YESTERDAY OF THE SENATE committee on health and demography, chaired by Sen. Pia Cayetano, the Reproductive Health bill was moved one of the seven bills on reproductive health under consideration, opened the proceedings by quoting a Catholic bishop.

Lacson cited statements by bishops in which the archbishop of Lipa bishop warned the sponsors of the bills of "receiving lobby money" in exchange for their support and advocacy. The prelate's accusations, the senator said, were "unrelated for ... or hospital and overbearing" and the senator declared he did not allow the accusations to go unanswered.

This was just the opening salvo of what seemed sure to be a surprisingly combative and contentious day. Normally, the hearing on the reproductive health measure up before the legislature, aside from Lacson and Cayetano who presided over the hearing, also in attendance were Senators Jinggoy Estrada and Aquilino Pimentel Jr. Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, who co-authored one of the RH bill measures and long a stalwart of reproductive health and rights, had previously announced himself as he was going to be out of town that day.

Sen. Francisco Tatad, with Senator Manny Villar, also had chosen yesterday when he asked why Tatad was billed as representing the World Youth Alliance, which Tatad explained by stating that he was invited by the group to speak on the subject. (TEARS) with Tony, who came to represent the Catholic bishops, later explained that her husband should have been identified as representing the International Right to Life Federation.)

Followers of the abortive health debates over the years (over the decades) should be in awe by now with the positions espoused by the friends, mainly that the population issue is "found to be a figment of the imagination," a perspective would be "unconstitutional," and would "destroy family morals and values."

* * *

WHAT struck me most about the former senator's position was his condemnation of the wording of the bill as reproductive health, principally on the ground by Miss Sen. Ethel Lagman, but increased "abortion" or perhaps [illegible] language of resolutions presented by Catholic bishops.

Also brought up by various resource persons during the hearing were the alarming figures on maternal mortality and morbidity, unmet needs by the inability of women to have control over their family, leading them to getting pregnant more frequently than they would wish, despite threats to their health. This was expressed most eloquently by Dr. Esperanza Cabral, former secretary of health of the Philippines, who spoke movingly of what they, as the "frontliners" in the delivery of reproductive health, see every day.

Also testifying in favor of the reproductive health advocacy and delivery group, also cited the "demand" for modern contraceptive services among poor community women, who opt to use IUDs and DMPA (an injectable contraceptive) to limit their pregnancies, mainly because, she insisted, the women were too poor to afford legal tubal ligation.

* * *

Like the waning criticisms what the "blind" population growth rate was for the Philippines, given the demands and pressures on resources and "carrying capacity." Miss Nemenzo of the Commission on Population said the government has already set a target of 1.91 percent PGR by 2010, although at present we are still around 2.04 percent PGR.

But it's time we looked beyond numbers and theory and turned and looked at the reality on the ground. The Church has all the right to preach what it wants, but beyond dominating Senate committee hearings, it has to do the dismantling—living amid her parishioners with as they see it.

Sex in Beijing

NEWSSTAND

John Nery

IT WAS ALREADY SPRING, BUT AT NIGHT THE wind was sharp, post-winter. Leaving the Foreign Languages bookstore after finding all three volumes of "Three Kingdoms" (I had been looking for this classic Chinese novel for a long time), I started to cross Beijing's busy, still-landlined, up in my suddenly inadequate suit. A lonely lady on a bicycle, looking for all the world like a heroine in a Korean telenovela (dressed very, extremely chic) approached me. I thought she was going to proposition me.

"Sex like videotape?" she said. "Very nice. Pretty girls."

"No, thanks," I said, and started on my way to the Xinhua bookstore branch right across the street from the bookstore.

At night, a portion of Wangfujing turns into a pedestrian. Despite the weather, there were still many strollers, some obviously tourists like me taking in the sights.

She followed me across the street. "Only 400, one night, 1,000. Very pretty girls."

I said "No, thanks" again (and again). But she thought she had seen me on the street, so she followed me into the bookstore, and then into the next.

"McDonald's," I said, and immediately left bodies by answering.

"It's very nice. Hot here," she said. "I bring pretty girls. If you don't like, it's okay."

Yes, I said again, but by the second time, "It's very nice," she said. "Hair here."

By then we had reached the McDonald's branch, which had no restroom on the first floor. "Very nice," she said. "Pretty girls."

This time, I was more forceful. Before inside the restaurant to leave "No, thank you."

Instead Henrina snapped: "Whatever you!" the

The image I have in mind is altogether a more quiet one. In the mid-1990s, my school's student council used to hold seminars in the fraternity and sorority houses. He kept a browning distance. At one such seminar, however, I saw him standing closely with a guest, who turned out to be JV Bautista (at least I think it was JV Bautista). They huddled on the veranda, looking down on the unchanging Diliman scene. It looked like an old woman passing on the wisdom of the ages to the younger. Or it looked like two engineering colleges to a grandson. Maybe it was both. We "funny" had been fathered on entire generations of activists.

Now, I'm seeing the country's longest-serving senator not as a founder of Bayan, but the man who is founder of many other organizations. He was, for instance, a co-founder of the PDP-Laban political party too. He was a shining example of personal courage; he was a shining example of political savvy. He was a shining example of how to use the latter to help the former. He never neglected the need for institutional or organizational action either. To that end, he left his legacies, his nationwide network, his good name.

* * *

The decision of the Dumaguete City Council to declare journalist Al Jacinto "persona non grata" is outrageous. Jacinto was merely doing his job. Filing stories for GMANews.tv.

The National Union of Journalists of the Philippines condemned the council's decision, and emphasized the essence "faction is a universal and was simply performing his duties, as demanded by his profession and news organization. Any statement against the formation of a local chapter of the union would be violative of different sources duly identified in the articles. They were arrested by personalities campaigning against the controversial and falsified RH issue. Contrary to the council's belief, Jacinto's articles did not "malign" anyone or "slander" a person.

In fact, it was the council's resolution that brought shame to Dumaguete's fortune. When politicians declare a particular out of bounds, it means either of two things: they have lied their heads, or the earth opened.

* * *

Email: jnery@inquirer.com.ph

Barrio 101

YOU WOULD FEEL THE SAME WAY IF YOU WERE ME 20 months ago. I was a Manila-educated, Tagalog-speaking, newly licensed physician sent to a remote 100-clinic municipality in Davao Sur as a doctor to the barrio. I couldn't help but feel important and all knowing.

However, I wasn't sure in the barrio where I started working for better. So, I'm patient.

To get to the barrio, I had to ride a community jeep for almost eight hours by bus from Manila. Once I left from the provincial capital and entered 45 minutes from the main highway. You either enjoy the bumpy ride, take it the view of mountains on one side and cliff and valley on the other or fall yourself with boredom.

Since Filipino is the national language, you would think you wouldn't have much difficulty communicating anywhere in the Philippines as long as you speak it. During my very first week, the barrio taught me (more So...2. Filipino may be the national language, but it is not understood, much less is it spoken, by all Filipinos.

That is true of the patients I see here, especially those who grew up in upland barangays. What's even more striking is that some older folks speak better English than Filipino. So much for learning the national language. I thought I could survive without having to learn the dialect. I couldn't even more than I realized at the very least to understand it. And fast.

It was barrow time when I came to this barrio, and almost immediately I learned lesson No. 1: Rice does not grow in grocery stands. Real, hard-working people quite literally break their backs to grow and harvest it. So when I arrived during the harvest season we get the highest number of patients complaining of muscle or back pain. If we could learn to value the effort a farmer puts into growing rice, we might not have the crops we have right now.

A doctor to the barrio is not only a healer but also a manager of the community's health. I was soon to learn that the job. After finding student organizations in school, two months' training in community medicine and with "MD" of my name, how hard could it be? Four months after arriving in the barrio, I learned lesson No. 4: Leadership is earned and learned.

Fairytales and a title can make one an instant leader, but only for a very short time. Effective leadership takes time to learn. One may be named leader because of one's income or education, but true leadership requires respect and trust from the followers.

I joined the Doctors to the Barrios Program with the crazy idea that I could change the world. (Its kidding.) But after six months, the barrio taught me lesson No. 5: If you want the world to change, change first.

I had a plan in my mind: what to do, what to change. What I forgot to consider was that I was entering a community that had its own system and values, employees who were here long before I arrived and who would be here long after I went to finish. If I wanted to carry out the changes I had in mind, I might as well have built a new community from scratch.

I was the one who changed—with great difficulty I changed the way I talk, the way I dress (occasionally), what I can and cannot do. I did all these in the hope that I could communicate well. Then, small changes followed. I may not have changed the world, but I made a significant difference in a few lives.

The journey wasn't easy. Most of the time, idealism wasn't enough to get me through. Reality bumped me hard in the head. I was already in the barrio for nearly a year when I realized that my patients dying from the lack of a few pesos. Despite me through rough times was love. It: When all else fails, pray.

Imagine coming up with a million ideas, only to find out that your budget can only fund one or, if you're lucky, two of them. Imagine coming face to face with a 70-year-old man complaining of chest pain and finding out he is having a heart attack and that he needs to be given medication promptly to prevent further disabilities and then rushed to the hospital. But the reality is, you don't have any medicine on hand and the nearest hospital is four hours away—by foot. What can you do except pray?

It took me over a year to learn and practice lesson No. 3: Live simply.

I used to consider a cup of Starbucks coffee to be essential and thought missing a blockbuster movie would kill me. This barrio taught me otherwise. It taught me to identify real necessities from the "necessities" dictated by a consumer society. Money is a necessity, but not something to be worshiped. Power is a necessity but satisfying ay with your favorite TV series is not. Spending out the anniversary luggage money life does not only lighten my journey, it also gives me more opportunities to share my blessings with those who need them most.

After a year and a half in this barrio, I finally accepted lesson No. 6: Not all politicians are corrupt, but stay away from those who are.

Being educated for four years at the University of the Philippines puts your mind in default: all politicians are corrupt. However as another health advocate, environment advocate or political activist, I have come to realize that there is a difference between those who serve family enough for his family from politics and supplements his income by farming but still manages to fit his constituents' problems. Another is a councilor who genuinely has a calling to serve the people and you know that by just chatting his hand. Indeed there are politicians whose hearts, minds and actions are truly dedicated to public service.

My two years are almost up and this barrio is still teaching me lessons No. 9: Health is in the hands of every Filipino but only a few know this.

The Department of Health, together with non-government organizations, has 30 or more health programs. Few people can name more than five of these programs. Health centers are equipped to deal with primary cases and not to hemodialysis drugs are given free. If half of Filipinos knew these, then they can be empowered regarding their health. If every parent knew that measles or hepatitis B vaccines are given free to infants, we could reduce the incidence of these diseases. Families, if not studies, were then wealthy. If every Filipino knew that confinement in PhilHealth can reduce their health expenses by almost half, he would know where and when to seek health care.

If there is one thing about this barrio that had the strongest impact on me—it is lesson No. 10: Humility.

Two years ago, I was more humbling than meeting a farmer whose entire existence is driven by his choice of raising his children's new college degree, never mind if he misses a meal or two a day. You feel as little in the presence of such an who walk several kilometers to install roaring sheds or a mother who is awakened in the middle of the night to hold her a mother giving birth.

I am humbled by the experience, by the place, but most especially, by the people. You would, too, if you tried living here.

Che G. Zablan, M.D., 29, hopes to enter a residency training program in a government hospital in metropolitan Area.

YOUNG BLOOD

Che G. Zablan, M.D.

We want to know what the young people are doing and how are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from its twenty-something and below—Ed.

MMDA abusing poor vendors

I HELPFULLY RESENT THE PATTER Metropolitan Manila Development Authority conducts its clean-up operations. While I am for its objective to clean streets and roadways, I don't like it that its operatives deprive poor vendors of their prized merchandise. Why can't the MMDA just drive the vendors away and clear the streets without confiscating their goods? It is the very act of confiscation that triggers resistance and violence.

To be sure, there are vendors' zones/ vendors, but it's not a lie to drive them away like cats and rodents/mice. They are humans and they deserve to be treated as such. They are not even criminals regardless of whether the MMDA believes that blocking the streets or sidewalks is a crime. For the record, the government employees who add to their income through kickbacks and bribes. They are private, self-employed individuals who resort only to living safe, or decent. Dwellers their traffic if and violate their persons or property deprive them of their property.

Their merchandise is not contraband if it were, it would deserve confiscation). These items were acquired with their hard-earned money. What the hell has happened to the constitutional provision that no person shall be deprived of life, liberty or property without due process?

The MMDA may argue that the vendors will just go back to their usual "field of action," unless their merchandise is confiscated. But does the MMDA really believe that after confiscating their goods, the vendors will thereafter forever stay home praying for means to fill their bellies? Of course not! They will look for another place to sidewalk or roadway, sell another supply of goods, to ply their trade. After all, it's human nature to resist to cope to find one's family and children.

Why doesn't the MMDA just assign an area for vendors near underpasses? Does this area defined with clear demarcation lines in MMDA's favor be select. And put large notices warning the vendors that if they go beyond the area their goods will be confiscated. Only when they sell outside the area should their goods be confiscated. With the notices, there is due process in a way.

The problem now is that the vendors do not know the exact place where they can peddle their wares. They take chances, but many, they are relentlessly and unscrupulously deprived of their property by rude and arrogant MMDA operatives.

The approach to the problem should be subtle. The hard-up approach has proved futile and hasn't solved the problem. The law on this matter should be clear. It explained to the vendors. They are ordinary people who are gentle, easily led or educated, empowered and well-placated if the MMDA will. With the appeal to the emergent chain of the MMDA is my this-ing gesture. The MMDA's new clearing operations might yet make a difference.

—ERNIE B. CHENGELIN,
Officer of the Comelec Secretary
Commission on Elections
Intramuros, Manila

LETTERS

Make RP courts more accessible

CHIEF JUSTICE REYNATO PUNO has spearheaded moves to make justice accessible to the poor. Seeing that they are being deprived of quality legal services by reason of their poverty, he proposed to "use the rule-making power of the Supreme Court under the Constitution to enhance existing rules or hand down new ones to increase their access to justice." (Inquirer, 7/12/08)

With all due respect, Your Honor, has not about starting with the prevailing rules promulgated by the Supreme Court itself changing tremendous fee for the filing of court cases? Under the present rules, only the monetized can file cases for violation of procedures. The poor can only search with abysmal frustration. Yet the Constitution clearly says, "Access to the courts shall not be denied by reason of poverty."

Another discombobulating reality in this country is the Department of Justice's seemingly inevitable urge to find cases. Believe it or not, the DOJ has its own schedule of fees for filing criminal cases. Pity should citizens pay for initiating criminal prosecution when it is the constitutional duty of the government to promote peace and order and, accordingly, to have criminal offenders to court for punishment?

These criminal cases are prosecuted in the name of the People of the Philippines, the real offended party. The complainant is no more than a witness for the state. He has to pay for the "privilege" of testifying for the state? **What kind of a** bonny policy is this?

—STEPHEN L. HERNANDO,
dmcasanova@yahoo.com.ph

GSIS response on CTPL: Yes we can!

ALLOW US TO RESPOND TO THE ISsues raised in Sabin Celino Montes's column titled "Can the GSIS handle CTPL?" (Inquirer, 8/2/10).

First: That is our answer to the question. The GSIS can and will provide CTPL insurance coverage to private motor vehicle owners. The GSIS has proven not only competence but also capacity in providing insurance for all government motor vehicles.

The GSIS network is wide and far-reaching. This network will help GSIS efficiently handle the CTPL for private vehicles. The GSIS has several field and satellite offices throughout the country. It has a call center that operates 24 hours every day. It has a new messaging system, which people can use to send an email their claims, problems and other concerns. The GSIS has several insurance adjusters and appraisers.

There is no legal impediment against the GSIS' providing CTPL insurance coverage. Last year, the Department of Justice has issued an opinion which states that—under the GSIS charter and other relevant laws—the GSIS can engage in the private insurance business. We must quickly add that the GSIS' engagement in the CTPL business is contingent upon the GSIS' law by the Department of Transportation and Communications.

The allegation that the GSIS-CTPL system will result in a monopoly is untrue. It is baseless. The majority of the legislators CTPL providers will have the opportunity to participate in the business. But the fly-by-night insurance companies that want to provide the CTPL at cheap and will be trapped from entering and profiting from the underpayment of our countrymen, and from cheating the government of much needed taxes.

Finally, we would like to assure the public that all CTPL insurance premiums collected, genuine and all valid claims as well as taxes to the government will be promptly paid.

—JOSEFINO VILLENA,
senior vice president,
Investment Service
Investment Systems,
Financial Center, Pasay City

GMA wrong: VAT removal to benefit poor more than rich

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-Arroyo reported in her State of the Nation Address the claim she made in Baguio City last July 26—that she will double consumer 50 percent of power and removing the VAT will benefit those more than the poor who get to enjoy subsidies taken from the VAT collected.

But data from the Department of Energy show that in 2007, 39.46 percent of electricity was consumed by the industrial sector, 29 percent by the commercial sector, 31.45 percent by public buildings and street lighting, and, 39.55 percent, by residential customers.

The first three groups of consumers already account for 69.91 percent of the total power. The companies pass on the VAT to the public, which includes the poor, through the prices of their products or services. The power consumed by street lighting and public buildings is paid with people's taxes.

When 70 percent of the 31.11 percent of the electricity that goes to residential customers is used up by well-to-do households that consume more than 500 kWh per month, the Meralco records show that they are only 10 percent of the total number of residential users. It is clear therefore that it is not the well-to-do but their hacienderos compadrons in the majority who pay directly and indirectly 90 percent of the VAT on power.

And only a fraction of the collected VAT goes to the poor as dole. In fact, out of the P1.8 billion in VAT collected from consumers of less than 100 kWh per month since December 2005, only P632 million is being returned to them. Correct misinformation on land data tells us that more Filipinos would be better helped with the removal of the VAT on power.

—RODOLFO RAMIREZ,
resistance Aghasa Woman
aghasa.national@gmail.com

Whatever happened to RA 7192?

I READ WITH KEEN INTEREST Allison del Rosario's article, "Congress's low GDS progress, a national priority" (Inquirer, 7/28/08).

I am curious how government has implemented the provisions of Republic Act (RA) 7192 or Women in Development and National Building Act, particularly the following provisions, which concern the allocation of GDA (official development assistance) funds for women:

"Section 2. Declaration of Policy.—The state recognizes the role of women in nation-building and shall ensure the fundamental equality before the law of women and men.

"To attain this foregoing policy:

"(1) A substantial portion of official development assistance funds received from foreign governments and multilateral agencies and organizations shall be set aside and utilized by the agencies concerned to support programs and activities for women;

"Section 4. Mandate.—The Social Development Committee shall, in coordination with the Philippine Commission on Women, the National Economic and Development Authority, the Department of Budget and Management, the Department of Finance, the Department of Foreign Affairs, the Department of Trade and Industry, the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Labor and Employment, the Department of Interior and Local Government, the Department of Education, Culture and Sports, the Department of Health, the Department of Social Welfare and Development, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the Department of Agrarian Reform, the Department of Public Works and Highways, the Department of Transportation and Communications, the Department of Energy, the Department of Tourism, the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, the Commission on Higher Education, the Philippine Information Agency, the Philippine Trade Training Center, the Philippine Center for Investment, the Philippine Export Zone Authority, the Cooperative Development Authority, the Bureau of Agricultural Research, the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, the Bureau of Animal Industry, the Bureau of Soils and Water Management, the Bureau of Plant Industry, the Land Bank of the Philippines, the Development Bank of the Philippines, the Social Security System, the Government Service Insurance System, the Philippine Veterans Bank, the Philippine Veterans Affairs Office, the Commission on Population, the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council, the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration, the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration, the Philippine Tourism Authority, the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation, the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office, the Philippine Inter-Agency Committee, the Philippine Coconut Authority, the Philippine Sugar Commission, the Philippine Fiber Industry Development Authority, the Philippine Rice Research Institute, the Philippine Council for Agriculture and Fisheries, the Philippine Council for Industry and Energy Research and Development, the Philippine Council for Health Research and Development, the Philippine Council for Advanced Science and Technology Research and Development, the Philippine Council for Natural Resources and Environment Research and Development, the Philippine Council for Socio-Economic Research and Development, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology, the Philippine Nuclear Research Institute, the Philippine Textile Research Institute, the Philippine Science High School System, the Philippine Normal University, the Philippine Women's University, the Philippine Women's Research Institute, the Philippine Women's Research Institute, the Philippine Women's Research Institute

Across the NATION

THESE forested mountains that surround the rice terraces of Hungduan town in Ifugao is known as a route taken by communist rebels on their Cordillera lair. AP/BOY C.

Rebels keep forests alive–UK historian

By Vincent Cabreza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BAGUIO CITY—WARS HAVE DAMAGED THE country's forests and may have been the key to its current state of deforestation, according to archival records unearthed by a British historian.

Ret. Dr. Greg Bankoff, a visiting professor from the University of Hull in the United Kingdom, said he was also surprised by information that suggests that years of insurgency and rebellion are keeping the rest of the country's forests intact.

Bankoff last week spoke about the legacy of human conflicts on the country's forests before the University of the Philippines Baguio's centennial lecture series.

"Forest history ... is actually (like) charting (of) the rise of complex societies," he said.

The depletion of Philippine forests, he said, occurred side by side with the buildup of coalitions from the start of the Spanish colonial period until 1565.

His finds involved the impact on Philippine forests of the Spanish drive to harness shipbuilding to thwart Dutch invasion in the 16th century, the fortification of the Cordillera in the 19th century and World War II.

Bankoff said data was the reason Filipinos should find it fascinating that thickly forested lands today in Northern Luzon and in Mindanao also host rebels.

He said common sense dictates that rebels make sure their bases are preserved, which is why they often protect their forests.

"In contemporary times, the session of [rebels in] mountains of the forests is a very interesting one ... One could argue that war could encourage insurgency to preserve watersheds and forest cover. There is a direct relationship [evident between] forests and rebels that would make us ask those [of] do that but I don't think we are going to do that," he said.

"What it does suggest is that not all forests need to be sacrificed. If we can leave the forest alone for whatever reason ... we should be able to do that even when there is no [obvious insurgency]," he said.

He added: "It's easy to forget how ubiquitous a material wood was in the past given an age of plastic, concrete and steel, especially our age of plastic bags."

But Filipinos cut trees to build homes and to cook.

Wide-scale forest exploitation began when Spain set up large shipbuilding areas in Mindanao to sustain its colonial hold over the islands.

Bankoff said some of the world's largest warships of that period were built in the Philippines, using now gone species of timber for the sturdy Spanish ships.

By in the 17th and 18th centuries, large volumes of timber were used to build and sustain Spanish forts, including the outskirts of the Cordillera communities.

Timber was again used to build the Spanish-American War, a prelude to American logging ventures that will operate today.

Between 1942 and 1945, Philippine trees put to work devastating forests to widen thoroughfares to feed the occupying Japanese forces.

Bankoff said historians note that the most destroyed important wood species and started an imbalance in the ecosystem. To build weapons and warships, colonial governments favored sturdy mixed species, leaving behind inferior trees.

As populations increase, forest areas receded, Bankoff said, and there is evidence that 30 percent of lowlands are in Ifugao around lands disappeared before the start of commercial logging in the 20th century.

"One of the things that essentially strike me is how old the arguments are [about forest depletion] ... its documents of the mid-19th century, they were already complaining of erosion, siltation, drying of rivers...all the kinds of things we think of as contemporary issues," he said.

"I find this depressing. This was over 150 years ago and apparently we haven't made much progress since then."

Panlilio sacks 40 quarry workers

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—PAMPANGA Gov. Eddie Panlilio on Monday terminated the services of 40 employees assigned to the provincial government's quarry special committee as they resumed their picket on the capitol grounds here over unfulfilled agreements reached in July.

Eduardo Gonzales, the leader of the protesting workers, said they have been informed of Panlilio's pronouncement but have yet to receive a notice of termination.

Gonzales said the group would continue and they would demand for the resignation of provincial administrator Efraim Tabia, whom they believed to have prepared a July 10 letter that terminated the services of 71 employees who joined the first picket on July 10 to 13.

This, he said, violated their agreement during the July 14 negotiations brokered by civil society groups that the protesting workers would be reinstated.

The first protest opposed the reorganization of the committee following reports of incidence of illegal quarry operations that the supervisors allegedly failed to stop.

The other cause, they said, was the inclusion by which Tabia dealt with them.

Panlilio said he had cancelled the July 14 termination order to keep up with the agreement and subsequently reinstated all of them even as they were casual employees.

The contract, however, would last until Aug. 31 and would be renewable monthly because of budgetary constraints.

The provincial board has yet to approve a supplemental budget for their additional compensation and the committee's operations, Panlilio said.

He said he has been using the budget of the governor's office since January to support the committee's operations, which the provincial board did not fund.

Gonzales said the monthly contract does not ensure that they would get their Christmas bonus.

Panlilio said civil service rules entitle casual employees to four months of continuous service to get such bonus.

Panlilio said: "In resuming the picket, they broke our agreement that we would hold a series of negotiations until we resolve our issues." Rinnelle Oyales, Inquirer Central Luzon

Have papers ready, mothers of Japanese-Filipino kids told

By Gerrodine Lacerta
Inquirer Mindanao

DAVAO CITY—A JAPANESE LAWYER HAS urged the Filipino mothers of children of Japanese fathers to take advantage of a new law that would grant Japanese citizenship to the children.

Masanori Kimitsuki of Tokyo-based Japanese-Filipino Children Lawyers Association told a roomful of Filipino women here the June 4 ruling of the Japan Supreme Court reversed the previous law which only granted nationality to Japanese-Filipino children whose parents were legally wedded.

"The Japanese Supreme Court has pronounced such ruling as unconstitutional," said Kimitsuki, who was in the city last week for a forum with Japanese-Filipino children and their mothers. "It's not the fault of the children if their parents are not married."

"Children and mothers living in Davao can apply at the Japanese Embassy once the law takes effect," he said.

He said applications must be filed before a child's 20th birthday.

"Japanese-Filipino children from 18 to 19 years old [are urged] to prepare their documents as soon as possible," Kimitsuki said.

The new law is expected to open the door to Japanese citizenship for tens of thousands of Japanese-Filipino children.

"All they want is recognition more than anything else," said Sister Celine Caindog, executive director of the Center for Overseas Workers Investor Inc. (CenWI).

Jean Shigeru, president of Samahan ng Kababaihan para sa Kinabukasan ng mga Japanese Filipino Children (Women's Association for the Rights of Japanese Filipino Children), said her 11-year-old son was encouraged under the old law although his father has been sending financial support occasionally.

"The new law can help a lot," she said. "Parents do not need to get married to have the children recognized."

She said that with the law children abandoned by their Japanese fathers will be looking for a chance to go to Japan.

Business Strategy, Planning, and Performance

Featuring research and applications of Return Driver Strategy™, a framework derived from an extensive ten-year study of the cash flow performance of more than 15,000 companies worldwide. Gain an understanding of strategic frameworks that focus on designing, developing, and evaluating business strategies.

Presented by:

Prof. Joel Litman
Director, Credit Suisse Holt

August 29 - 30 and September 5 - 6, 2008
8:00 am - 5:00 pm

Target participants:
- Business and corporate managers
- Investment analysts and money managers
- Entrepreneurs

Prof. Litman is co-author of the critically acclaimed book, DRIVEN: Business Strategy, Human Artistry, and the Creation of Wealth

For details and registration, please call Art Dholos at 830.3041 or Marivik Calanog at 840.1742 or write to us at ce-ateneo@mpc.ateneo.edu. You may also visit and REGISTER ONLINE at www.ce.ateneo.edu

Center for Continuing Education

THE ATENEO BRAND IS YOUR CAREER ADVANTAGE

DENR scored for diverting funds for Guimaras

NEWSBRIEFS

■ CEBU CITY

British diver drowns

A BRITISH national, who went scuba diving on Sunday, drowned off Barangay Marigondon, Lapu-Lapu City.

PSI Fuel Nnag, desk officer of the Lapu-Lapu City police office, identified the victim as Michael Graham Beardsley, 65, who lived in Barangay Gun-ob, Lapu-Lapu City.

Nnag said Beardsley was with a group of eight Filipino and foreign scuba divers at 11:25 a.m. when their diving instructor, Jane Hollmer, noticed that the British was missing.

Swimmers, who had been diving in Cebu for two years, was last or found floating in the vicinity of the dive and was brought to the Mactan Community Hospital where he was declared dead on arrival, Nnag said.

Jhonnel Magallanes, Inquirer Visayas

■ DAGUPAN CITY

Body found in coastline

A RESCUE group from the City Disaster Coordinating Council (CDCC) on Monday retrieved the body of a man floating along the coastline of Barangay Aplaya here following Sunday afternoon's flash flood.

Glenda Ferrer, CDCC Response Unit's team leader and chapter president of Kabalikat Rescue and Communications, said no one in the area could identify the victim.

"What we have is an all-male bottom-less right arm. We did not find any identification (card)," Ferrer said.

Efrim C. Aguirre, Inquirer Northern Luzon

■ MARINDUQUE

2 senior citizens die in fire

TWO senior citizens died in a fire that gutted a house made of light materials in Sta. Cruz town Saturday morning, a fire official said.

The fire started at 3:40 a.m. at the house of Dionisia Zulueta in Sitio Lim Street, Barangay Bagong Bitang in that town, said Senior Fire Officer Alexander Ito, officer in charge of the town's fire station.

He identified the fatalities as Socorro Dueñas and Josefina Zubiets, both senior citizens.

He said fire trucks from neighboring municipalities of Torrijos, Boac and Mogpog arrived an hour late since the fire department received the report 20 minutes after the fire broke out. The only fire truck in Sta. Cruz is still under repair, he said.

Ronald Dion Cleveland, Inquirer Southern Luzon

■ NEGROS OCCIDENTAL

Guard stabbed to death

A SECURITY guard on duty at the Energy Development Corp. geothermal power plant in Barangay Mailum, Bago City, was stabbed to death Monday night, police said on Wednesday.

The victim identified as Rafael Capoteng, a member of the Mailum Security Agency, died at the EDC industrial three-storey complex, police said.

Bago City police chief Supt. Melchor Coronel said Capoteng's assailants also took his 12-gauge shotgun with ammunition and a communication radio handset.

Carla P. Gomez, Inquirer Visayas

5 kids hurt in blast

FIVE minors were injured, two of them in critical condition, when the fire ammunition of an M-203 grenade launcher they mistook for a toy gun exploded Sunday in Tagaytay City.

The victims were identified as Andrei Villaflor, 8, Maria Elaiza Esporas, 8, Aurel Rose Bautista, 9, Louella Magbalot, 7, and her sister Mariel, 9.

The children found the rifle grenade, which they reportedly mistook for a toy gun, near Tagaytay's Amphitheater Park. Tagaytay Mayor Agnes Tolentino announced on the air, causing the explosion, police said.

Cecil P. Gomez, Inquirer Visayas

FISHERMEN from Sitio Lusuran, La Paz, Guimaras, hope to catch fish from the sea that has been seeing renewed hope after an oil spill, with the growth of mangroves

4 Army soldiers wounded in NPA ambush

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

JORDAN, GUIMARAS—Guimaras officials have vowed the Department of Environment and Natural Resources for implementing oil spill rehabilitation projects to make sure others will be the oil spill.

Governor Gov. Felipe Nava said the DENR had implemented livelihood projects using rehabilitation funds even in communities that were hardly affected by the Aug. 11, 2006 oil spill.

"I'm not convinced with what's happening. But are in the clink and we don't know if these are beneficial to the people of Guimaras. I think we should correct this (because) we are wasting precious money," Nava said during a presentation of updates on the rehabilitation program marking the second anniversary of the oil spill held on Monday.

The DENR has implemented a livelihood project for oil spill affected areas costing P55.451 million, with P29.7 million intended for Guimaras Island.

The amount was part of the P1.01 million allotted to the DENR from the 0965-A multi-year rehabilitation fund for areas affected by the oil spill that occurred when the MT Solar 1 chartered by Petron Corp. sank in stormy seas off Guimaras. The cargo ship spilled more than 2.1 million liters of tanker fuel oil it was transporting from Batangas to Zamboanga.

Projects

The DENR projects include the production and cultivation of "alinbao" (Talisi sinaloensis) in Barangay Tando and bamboo production and processing in Barangay Dagsican. Both villages are in Buenavista town.

DENR Regional Technical Director Alita Lontoc said the projects benefit 40 households in Dagsican and 100 residents in Tando.

Sen. Jinggoy Estrada, provincial planning and development officer, said the projects should be focused in the towns of Nueva Valencia and Sibunag.

Nueva Valencia is the worst affected by the oil spill of the province's five municipalities. Sibunag was also affected because the oil spill hit the southwestern part of the island.

Hardly affected

Babao pointed out that Buenavista, located in the northeast section of Guimaras and where the DENR projects are located, was hardly affected by the oil spill.

"The rehabilitation fund was supposed to be given to those who lost their livelihood during the oil spill," Babao said.

Nava lamented the implementation of the DENR projects despite the holding of two meetings between stakeholders and government officials to "synchronize the various programs and efforts to avoid duplication and to ensure the actual needs of affected communities.

"We did interlocking sessions because we have limited funds and are some to maximize the impact. But (the DENR) spent P30 million for only 40 fisherfolk families. We have to use the money wisely," Nava said.

Lontoc said the projects in Buenavista benefit people's organizations of the Community-Based Forest Management (CBFM) areas.

Even if they are in upland areas, the residents are also affected by the oil spill, she said.

Lontoc said the DENR also has livelihood projects in Nueva Valencia but she said other agencies also have projects in the area, which the DENR does not want to duplicate.

LUCENA CITY—FOUR ARMY men were wounded when suspected New People's Army rebels ambushed a group of soldiers from the 16th Infantry Battalion aboard a military truck traveling along the highway in Barangay Ilayan, Real town in Quezon province on Monday, the spokesperson of the Army's Southern Luzon Command said in a report.

Army Capt. Lutch Sinsuat said that at about 2 p.m., an undetermined number of NPA rebels fired at the soldiers while on the way to position themselves as a blocking force to the stopping guerrillas that earlier attacked the town hall in the inland town of Pandakan.

A few minutes later, the reinforcement team from the same battalion clustered upon an ambush group of NPA rebels in Barangay Lubayan also in Real.

The firefight was still ongoing as of press time, Sinsuat said over the phone.

Capt. Peter Gerweniego Jr., 16th IB spokesperson, said the four soldiers only suffered minor wounds and were being treated in a hospital in the area.

"The harassment being waged by terrorist communists was also only meant to divert attention from our ongoing operations," he said over the phone.

He claimed that aside from acting as a blocking force in the Pandakan raiders, the Army soldiers were also part of the government forces that were engaged in a major operation against MILF rebels in northern Quezon.

Earlier that day, the NPA rebels attacked the Pandakan town hall and took at least nine firearms from the police office.

A Pandakan policeman said more than 30 men launched the attack while the local government employees were holding a prayer during the flag-raising ceremony held at the plaza fronting the town hall.

The raiders seized eight shotguns, one long firearm and several rounds of ammunition, said the policeman who requested anonymity as he was not authorized to talk about the incident.

"The attack was over in about 10 to 15 minutes. We were not able to put up a fight for fear that many civilians might be caught in the crossfire. There were also many students around because the town hall is near the school," said the lawman.

The informant said the NPA rebels also partially burned the government are of a Globe relay station located in the mountain area of the place.

He said the leader of the NPA even made a short speech before the assembly of government employees and also talked to Pandakan Mayor Rogel Dorton.

"The speech was interrupted several times by shouts of 'Mabuhay ang NPA' coming from the rest of the rebels," said the policeman.

He said the NPA rebels escaped aboard several motorcycles and boats and headed toward the town of General Nakar at the foot of Sierra Madre.

Sinsuat said at least four Air Force helicopters had been dispatched to track down the escaping rebels.

"This attack was an act of desperation of the terrorists to regain the interest of military forces in our communities, cry. They want to impress to the public that they are still a force to reckon with despite their losses to the battlefield and declining support from the masses," she said.

On Friday night, two more cell sites of Globe Telecom were attacked by suspected NPA rebels in Gumaygay province.

One of the cell sites was in Barangay Aguacia Norte, a fishermen's camp from the Magallanes town's poblacion, while the other site is located in Barangay Bagong Camilla town.

The two incidents were the eighth and ninth in a series of harassments on Globe cell sites in the Bicol region since July 31.

Delfin Mallari Jr. with reports from Sun Star Naga, Inquirer Southern Luzon

Farmers complain of low buying price of palay

NAP (2008) Regan Cruz Teodoro Bagsolan Jr. and Cordillera agriculture regional director Cesar Rodrigues in reheating "puyo," a native muddish, in a dry pantry in Baguio

BONGEO, PANGASINAN—With the high price of rice in the market one will think that farmers are having the time of their lives.

But this is the from the tradition farmers are getting even more marginalized, an official of the party-list group Mono said.

When the price of rice increased months ago, the buying price of palay (unhusked rice) went up to more than P20 a kilogram but this dropped to as low as P10 to P15 (traders' price) this harvest time, said Francisco Ortiz, Abono president.

"And this is just the start of harvest season. What will happen if the bulk of palay is harvested? The prices may go down further," Ortiz, who tills a rice land in Umingan town, said.

He said farmers hoped that the National Food Authority would buy their harvest because the agency's buying price was higher than those offered by traders.

The NFA has pegged the buying price of palay at P17 a kg and is set to buy 3,000 metric tons (3-million cavans) of palay from local farmers from September to December this year.

But Ortiz said information gathered by Abono showed that the 3,000 MT represent only 5 percent of the projected palay harvest this planting season.

Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap earlier announced that the projected harvest this season is 10 million MT or 200 million bags of palay.

"We ask the NFA to buy more palay or about 20 percent of the harvest to support the farmers," he said.

The NFA has allotted P6.5 million for the purchase of 5,000 MT of palay this year but has spent P60 billion for the last two importations of rice.

Ortiz said instead of importing rice, the NFA should focus on the local production and buy from local farmers.

The farmers' plight is worsened by the increase in the cost of fertilizers, which now sell for P1,050 a bag.

The Department of Agriculture has started giving farmers a P500 fertilizer subsidy for each hectare of rice land.

But the distribution of the subsidy came late during the planting season.

"Some sold their (subsidy) coupons for only P350 or P400 because they needed the money," Ortiz said. Rolando Sotelo-Fuertes, *Inquirer Northern Luzon*

2 arrested in killing of Capiz broadcaster

By Felipe V. Calleo
Inquirer Visayas

ROXAS CITY—THE POLICE filed on Monday a complaint before the City Prosecutor's Office against the two suspects in the death of Radio Mindanao Network-dyWR anchorman Marcelo D. Rosas.

City Prosecutor Erwin Ignacio said he had formed a special panel of prosecutors to conduct the inquest investigation on the killing of Rosas.

Rosas was shot by one of two motorcycle-riding men while the victim was on his way home riding a motorcycle at Bayo Drive, Roxas City.

He was declared dead on arrival at the Capiz Emmanuel Hospital in Roxas City.

Police arrested Jarrel Lastimoso, 27, of Barangay Cogon Ilaya City, and Kristian Tan, 25, of Barangay Quinabcan, Maayon, Capiz, in the nearby town of Panay.

Lastimoso, who was identified as the alleged gunman, and Tan, who was the alleged driver of the getaway motorcycle, were presented to Ignacio on Monday afternoon.

Ignacio said the special panel composed of 2nd Assistant Prosecutor Salvador Dellera as head, 3rd Assistant Prosecutor Ebichi Asistores and 4th Assistant Prosecutor Jesson Advincula would determine what charge would be filed against Lastimoso and Tan.

It is likely, however, that the suspects would face a murder charge because the victim had the elements of treachery and evident premeditation, Ignacio said.

The police counted as witnesses the wife, four policemen from Roxas town and another four from Roxas City police station, including its commander Chief Insp. Leo Bueliza.

The police also presented as evidence, a black motorcycle without a license plate, a black jacket, black ski mask, two helmets, gloves and a plastic container.

Lastimoso said the victim owed him money. But Tan said he was not aware of any debt.

Ignacio said the police would also file charges against Lastimoso and Tan for violation of Republic Act 9516 or illegal possession of explosives.

The police also presented as evidence, a black motorcycle without a license plate, a black jacket, black ski mask, two helmets, gloves and plastic container.

However, the police have yet to submit to the city prosecutor's office the results of the ballistic tests of the two suspects.

Rosas' remains, accompanied by a motor caravan, will be brought on Monday to his hometown in Masbate, Capiz.

Rosas was the first ever journalist killed in Capiz.

Capiz broadcaster Marcelo Rosas in an MNN file photo.

Sabio admits brother tried to influence Meralco case

From page A1

Florida Sixth Romero—about his statement that his elder brother Gemilo, chair of the Presidential Commission on Good Government, had shown interest in the case.

Vitaliano Aguirre II, appearing as counsel for Associate Justice Bienvenido Reyes, who was absent as he was in hospital due to a heart ailment, also quizzed Sabio about his brother's involvement.

In his affidavit presented to the panel, Sabio revealed that Gemilo called him up at around 8 a.m. on May 28 in reference to the "tightness" of the mind of the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) and the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) in the Meralco case.

JOSE SABIO

CAMILO SABIO

The GSIS failed to wrest management control of Meralco from the Lopez family during the Special Meeting of stockholders' meeting in May. The state pension fund invested the Meralco management of "dissolve provisions" that resulted in high electricity rates. Meralco denied the accusations.

Advance information

Sabio said he was "surprised" that his brother had advance information that he (Sabio) had been relieved the third member of the division to which the Sheriden case had been raffled.

"Didn't you find that unethical? Did you harass your brother?" Caille asked Sabio, reminding him that Gemilo had nothing to with with the case as he had no business intervening in it.

"It never occurred to me. I'm sorry for that; I should have done that," Sabio replied, explaining that he did not think Gemilo because he "expected" him and because he told his brother that he would vote "according to my conscience."

Sabio's TRO

Sabio also told his brother that the most he could do was to have the issuance of a temporary restraining order (TRO) and injunctive relief scheduled for oral arguments, during which the respondents, the GSIS and SEC, must be able to convince him that the TRO did not have a legal basis.

Sabio was acting chair of the appellate court's 9th Division that granted the TRO in favor of Meralco on May 28.

The TRO was revised only minutes after the SEC adjourned a hearing during which Meralco was asked to explain its defiance of an SEC cease-and-desist order directing Meralco to set aside the consolidated power rates of the Lopezes in the election.

The GSIS argued that the election of the Meralco board was tainted by illegitimate proxies and said the suit would have given the GSIS majority control if the illegal proxies were excluded.

Sabio told Reyes, the regular chair of the 9th Division, had a squabble about who should continue presiding over the hearings when Reyes returned from a vacation leave.

Following a reorganization at the court, the final decision on the case was issued on July 23 by the 8th Division, headed by Reyes. The 8th Division upheld Meralco's argument that the SEC had no jurisdiction over the issue.

Camilo calls again

Aguirre was also able to elicit a new admission from Sabio that after the July 23 decision dismissing the case in favor of Meralco came out, Camilo called him up again to inquire about what had happened and why Sabio was not among the signatories.

"I said I was surprised that the decision came out and I said, 'Well, it's beyond me,'" Sabio replied.

Further questioning by Aguirre also brought up the issue of alleged "rigging of the raffle" or the appellate court because Sabio said that Camilo had called him up about the case as around 8 a.m. and that the raffle usually took place at 10 a.m.

Caille and Camilo by calling Sabio, may already have committed the crime of attempting to corrupt a public official, which is punishable under the Revised Penal Code.

Sharon said she was bothered by Sabio's attitude because the justice appeared to "take it for granted" and "seem in regard as normal" that proceedings in the Court of Appeals would look to outsiders.

Asked about the leakage, Sabio said that he thought "the walls have ears" to the appellate court and that "people have a way of knowing."

Caille also asked Sabio about Camilo's advance information on the case should have bothered Sabio and that Sabio should have called up his superior, Presiding Justice Conrado Vasquez Jr., about the "leakage."

"I really didn't feel that. I did not want to create another problem. But I was concerned of the urgency of the TRO," Sabio said.

"It caused more problems. It now involved three retired justices, we should be raising already," Caille said, referring to himself and the panel members and presiding Justice Ivan the audience.

P15 million bribe offer

Caille also asked Sabio if he was going to file a case against businessman Francis de Borja, who Sabio earlier claimed had offered him a P15 million bribe on behalf of the Lopez family.

Sabio replied that he was contemplating filing a case of attempting to corrupt a public official against De Borja.

Caille said that in hindsight, Sabio should have immediately reported to Aguirre or even Chief Justice Reynato Puno about De Borja's alleged bribery attempt.

Caille said coordination with the National Bureau of Investigation might have been made and an entrapment operation against De Borja could have been conducted.

Inconsistency

Aguirre pointed out an alleged inconsistency in the way Sabio related the bribery attempt to his daughter Vicky Angeli. Sabio said he texted his daughter on July 2 to tell her about the alleged P15-million bribe offer from Sheridan, to which she replied on July 7.

At the hearing on Friday, Sabio showed his cell phone containing his July 3 text and her daughter's text: cell phone containing her July 7 reply.

Aguirre said one could infer the passage of one's cell phone to any date so that the text message that the recipient could get would bear the date of the sender's phone.

Sharon commented that Sabio also took advantage of the fact that his older daughter, Sylvia Jo, was on Puno's staff to write the Chief Justice about the alleged bribery attempt. Sabio said informing Puno was the daughter's idea.

Kept in the dark

Earlier at the hearing, Sabio also faced a barrage of questions from associate Justice Vicente Roxas, the ponente of the assailed ruling of the division, who complained that he was "deeply troubled" because Sabio had kept him in the dark about the bribery attempt.

"That (bribery attempt) was a criminal act and anything that seeks to unfairly influence the case directly affect the persons and the decision," Roxas said.

Sabio said he tried to reach Roxas several times but the latter made himself "inaccessible."

Roxas also pointed out that Sabio became "substitute" in the 9th Division and even produced a memorandum Vasquez issuing for the substitution that Sabio presided over the meeting of July 23 because the ponente was not present.

"Isn't that simply unfair, sir?" Roxas asked Sabio during Sabio replied: "I'm not angry with you, I just pity you."

President assures Swiss head on South

By Christine O. Avendaño

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-Arroyo yesterday told visiting Swiss President Pascal Couchepin that her government was firmly dealing with the skirmishes in Sharifa Cotabato.

"It is something that we are handling in a manner that will restore the security of our people in general," Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita quoted Ms Arroyo as telling Couchepin.

Ermita said the administration believed the fighting between soldiers and Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) guerrillas would not escalate.

He said that police and military operations were in limited run the groups of Umbra Kato, head of the MILF's 105th command.

"I think this will be controlled, it will not escalate," Ermita said.

Ermita appealed for a moratorium on inflammatory statements in support of some for still-made strife by opposition Rodolfo Biazon.

RESIDENTS are evacuated from Talipao, Pikit, North Cotabato, amid fighting between government troops and Moro Islamic Liberation Front rebels.

COMELEC CHAIR Jose Melo shows his initial report on the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) poll doctoring to an excellent exercise during Monday's press conference at the Comelec office in Intramuros, Manila.

VOTERS are the automated machines in Shariff Aguak, Maguindanao, on Monday.

Excellent, Comelec says of high-tech ...

From page A1

positions and subsequently dropped.

Director General Avelino Razon of the Philippine National Police reported that yesterday's balloting was "generally peaceful."

Suspected MILF attack

The only report of violence came from Sipa-Sipa on Basilan Island across the channel from Zamboanga City when suspected fighters of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) attacked the town proper and burned houses and a bridge.

Tipo-Tipo Mayor Tong Inarul said two civilians were killed, including one identified as Lieutenant Tahirul, 30. Two policemen were missing and a soldier was reported wounded in the assault that began at 6:45 a.m. and lasted until 9 p.m.

Election spokesman said the attack was "clearly conducted and that balloting in three barangays there were recommended to be declared a failure.

Melo said that initial reports received at around 11 a.m. showed that the turnout in Basilan was 18 percent.

Lanao del Sur, Shariff Kabunsuan, Maguindanao, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi had attained 40-percent participation rate, Melo said.

Melo said the number of voters who went to the polls exceeded his expectations. "As we have said, anything between 30-40 percent, will be a good results. But 40 percent, well by 50 percent. We can say it's excellent," he said.

"Maybe they headed our calls to go out and vote. They were really excited to see how the voting was to be done," he added.

Turnout better than in past

Virgilio Elcia, Comelec regional director, said the turnout in this election was better than in previous elections, where the average was around 30-40 percent.

Maguindanao residents, who used the Smartmatic-TIM Corporation (SMTC) system supplied by Smartmatic-San Technologies Inc., voted using an electronic voting pad and touch-screen technology. Their votes were directly stored inside the machine.

Residents of Shariff Kabunsuan, Lanao del Sur, Basilan, Sulu, and Tawi-Tawi, or about 40 percent of the ARMM voters, used the Optical Mark Reader Technology (OMR) by Avante International Technology Inc.

Mayor Jesus Elanar Amora shouted the seal open beside the name of their chosen candidates printed in a special ballot. The ballots were scanned and recorded in designated counting centers.

'Smashing success'

Sen. Richard Gordon, chair of the Senate committee on electoral reforms, said voters in Maguindanao and Shariff Kabunsuan were really eager to try the new technologies.

"It was a smashing success. It's something to look forward to. It shows that Filipinos can conduct clean and honest elections," Gordon said in a briefing with Melo at the Comelec.

The Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting pointed to Sunday's and it was also satisfied with the conduct of the balloting in the region dubbed as the "shooting capital" of the Philippines.

Henrietta de Villa, PPCRV chair, said yesterday's elections were a definite improvements compared to past exercises.

"So far, compared with, I see an improvement. With the automated machines, we did not see voters who had difficulty with it because they tried so easily the machines beforehand," De Villa said.

"Definitely the anomalies were lessened because the human handling was also lessened," she said in an interview.

Ballot box snatching

Melo reported incidents of ballot box snatching in two villages of Inicup, Basilan, and in Lanao del Sur. He said unidentified armed men stormed the ballot boxes away from election officials on their way to the precincts in Barangay Tamalabong and Barangay Bolmay.

Barangay Tamalabong has five precincts and 1,566 voters while the second village has one precinct and 230 voters.

Melo said the Comelec had yet to declare failure of elections in the two villages. "We will wait for the election results. If the results will be affected, we will call for special elections," he explained.

The Comelec said that in Aleas, Basilan, the town mayor initially refused to hand over ballot boxes containing election paraphernalia to the board of election inspectors (BEI).

But eventually the mayor surrendered the ballot boxes, he said, and the Comelec appointed police personnel and civil servants to act as BEI.

Incidents of power failure

There were also reports of power failure in Sulu, but Comelec officials said the senior precincts had brought generators for such emergencies.

Melo said there were fears about the security of elections in three villages in Shariff Kabunsuan, namely Simuay, Lower Tariran and Bagumbayan, which borders North Cotabato, where the MILF and the military have been fighting in clashes since week-end.

Melo said officials there were considering transferring the precincts in the three areas to safer areas. However, there were threats from the MILF who said the Comelec and its partners could not move with police and military escorts.

Precincts across the ARMM opened around 7 p.m. and voting started smoothly, Melo said. Two hours after the voting booths closed at 3 p.m., the Comelec started to receive results from the voting centers.

Inside the Comelec session hall, session president Sixto Brizuela Jr., which was in charge of consolidating election results, installed a projection screen showing the status of transmission of precincts, town and provinces in real time.

Melo said the Comelec in Manila, where the regional board of canvassers is based, may proclaim winners of the gubernatorial and vice gubernatorial race by Wednesday. With reports from Edwin Fernandez, Charlie Lunar, Josephine Alaraon, Noah Macleon, Richel Umel and Ed Gonzalez, Inquirer Mindanao

NEWS

Tutors score DepEd execs' huge allowances

By Jerry E. Esplanada

WHO GOT HOW MUCH?

The 15,000-strong Alliance of Concerned Teachers has joined nonteaching personnel at the Department of Education in demanding the agency name the executives who benefited from the over P150 million in controversial "extra duty allowance" (EDA) over the past three years.

They made the call over the weekend, demanding "full transparency" in the perks and privileges enjoyed by DepEd executives.

The EDA is not covered by department guidelines and stems from line no legal basis, according to agency insiders.

Documents leaked to the Inquirer showed the EDA has been a regular feature of DepEd seminar and training programs.

• During the April 14-16 "[e]xtra duty for eligibility check" of 50 DepEd holders for the consolidation of various school buildings [illegible] nationwide, P117,000 was earmarked for EDA (out of the total activity budget of P139,700). Among the EDA recipients were Assistant Secretary for Finance Jesus Galvez, vice chair of the DepEd bids and awards committee, and panel members Annabelle Barnes and Desiguacio Gerlin Jr., as well as Admin Barcenas, chief of the BAC secretariat, among others.

• Of the P9.36-million budget for the nationwide Teachers Induction Program, at least P1.32 million was allocated for EDA by Dr. Beatriz Terso, executive director of the DepEd-attached Teacher Education Council.

• Of the nearly P1-million budget for the Personnel and Professional Enhancement Program, P126,000 was set aside for EDA by Zaida Antonio, head of DepEd's Staff Development Division and Human Resource Development Service.

• Of the P982,500 budget for the Library Management Training for Regions 3, 4-A and 4-B, P115,000 was allocated to EDA.

• For the Field Testing of Basic Administrative Service Improvement Course 1 for Region V, 18, 11, 12, Caraga and the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, P170,000 was set aside for EDA.

• In the Bureau of Elementary Education's Every Child a Reader training program, which has a budget of P4.38 million, P760,000 was set aside for EDA.

• In the P6.75-million basic course for new "mobile teachers" of the Bureau of Alternative Learning System, P210,000 was allocated to the EDA of trainers and facilitators.

In a statement, ACT also asked the DepEd to "involve independent teacher groups in the formulation of guidelines to provide a genuine check against possible abuses by management."

Earlier, ACT chair Antonio Tinio said they were "outraged that while some DepEd executives helped themselves to up to P50 million (a year) in unlawful allowances, nearly P700 million in allowances of public school teachers remained unpaid."

Education Secretary Jesli Lapus last week said all EDA payments had been suspended as "part of the streamlining operations of the department."

Lapus also directed Teodoro Bangit Jr., undersecretary for finance and administration, to come up with EDA guidelines.

Bangit said midyear the guidelines, EDA was "like a wayward bus, a bus without a driver."

He said the EDA system was in place when he and Lapus joined the DepEd in 2006.

During the past three years alone, the DepEd allocated over P3.42 billion for its various training programs.

For taking part, however briefly, in department-sponsored seminars and training programs, an unfinished number of DepEd officials have been charging up to P15,000 a day in EDA.

Some top agency officials attend an average of four to eight training programs a month—which they receive from P18,000 to P15,000 for merely making opening or closing remarks, said DepEd insiders.

"It think that delivering a brief speech or sharing their views on DepEd-related topics are part of their official functions," they said.

Even ordinary DepEd employees are afflicted with the EDA "virus," according to a DepEd section head, citing as an example "a casual employee here, with a P6,000 basic (monthly) pay, made a total of P72,000 in just three weeks by serving in the secretariat staff for three activities."

THE GENERICS PHARMACY 124 Branches Nationwide 20% Discount
CHEAPER MEDICINES HERE
7127777

Prosecutors say Villa-Ignacio withheld vital document

By Jocelyn R. Uy

TWO SENIOR PROSECUTORS AT THE Office of the Ombudsman yesterday accused Special Prosecutor Dennis Villa-Ignacio of withholding a vital affidavit in a multibillion-peso tax credit scam case.

In a statement, Bureau Director John Tamilin and Assistant Special Prosecutor Rodascincinelli Uy accused Villa-Ignacio of withholding the affidavit of witness Nilda Chingkoe, which was vital to winning the tax fraud case against the latter's businessman-brother and several officials of the Department of Finance.

Villa-Ignacio denied the allegation, saying this was part of the "deliberation job" against him by Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez.

The tax fraud case involves Bautista Chingkoe and several DOF officials who were charged with graft in 2004. A government report in the mid-1990s showed that several textile companies may have defrauded the government of P5.5 billion using questionable tax credit certificates (TCCs).

Investigators found some P3.5 billion of those TCCs had been filed by 10 companies owned or controlled by Bautista Chingkoe.

A TCC serves as proof of a company's claim for tax credits, which are given to exporters free entitled to duty free privileges or to tax refunds.

Last month, Gutierrez ordered the replacement of all the members of the prosecution panel handling the tax credit scam case. Villa-Ignacio was reassured as the lead prosecutor but he resisted the move, claiming it was an affront to his leadership.

Tamilin and Uy, who were involved in the move, yesterday said they had been "hesitant to disseminate" handling the case" because Felix Chingkoe's affidavit was not furnished them by Villa-Ignacio.

"The fact that we were not allowed to read and have a copy of this very vital document remains a mystery to us," they said.

But Villa-Ignacio soon day said Tamilin and Uy were in possession of the records of the case since they were in charge of them.

"I have yet to open the folders. It was only last week that the records of the cases were carried over to me," he told the Inquirer over the phone.

On July 28, Tamilin, Uy and seven other prosecutors asked Villa-Ignacio to resign his post.

Aplus METRO
Editor Editor G. Dipasupil

Another Pasay mall near LRT station on fire

Blaze 3rd incident to hit city arcades

By Julie M. Aurelio

A FIRE BROKE OUT IN A SHOPPING MALL ON TAFT AVENUE Extension in Pasay City the other night, disrupting yet again the operations of the Light Rail Transit Line 1.

At press time, firefighters were still battling the fire that began at 7:45 p.m. Sunday on the ground floor of the two-story Baclaran Terminal Plaza Mall right beside the LRT Baclaran station.

"We are having a hard time containing the building because of the intense heat and the thick smoke," said Supt. Sherwin Ramos, district fire marshal.

He added that they were trying to fight the fire by continuously pumping water into the mall to prevent the blaze from spreading to nearby establishments.

The incident was the third time a fire hit a mall in Pasay this year that also disrupted LRT operations. On July 17, a blaze broke out in Pamplail Plaza near the Libertad LRT station. Five days earlier, the Gallería Baclaran mall in front of the Baclaran Terminal Plaza Mall on Oct. 3.

"The fire is actually at the back of the building, near F. B. Harrison Street. But the building entrance is very narrow, so it's hard to enter. The smoke comes out in front of the entrance as a result," said Chief Insp. Justin Madaraj, city fire marshal.

He added that the fire has destroyed around 50 stalls on the first floor but has not spread to the second floor. "Even after ventilating the building by boring holes in the roof and its sides, the smoke is just too noxious and we lack the necessary breathing apparatus," he said.

Asked why it was taking so long to put out the fire, Madaraj said the first floor is full of flammable materials such as textile, clothes, shoes, pillow cases, cell phones and batteries.

"There are more combustible materials here than in Pamplail Plaza because this mall has more storage space," he explained.

Madaraj said he allowed some mall owners to take out their merchandise on Sunday night and early morning yesterday.

"I allowed them to go inside the mall, but I made it clear that the fire

A FIREMAN wets his face with water from a hose to provide his eyes some relief from the thick smoke coming from the burning Baclaran Terminal Plaza Mall in Pasay City. The fire, which began Sunday night, has yet to be put out as press time. RAFY ALEJO

bureau of Fire Protection would be responsible if anything happens to them. On one hand, if the owners get their wares, there will be less combustible materials for the fire to eat up," he added.

So far, no fatalities have been reported, although two volunteer firemen suffered deep cuts in their hands when they broke several glass windows to let the smoke out of the mall.

Authorities identified the owner of

ERRATUM

In the article about TV5 in page F4, dated **August 9**, the name "Jasper Marisgan", should have been **"Jasper Evangelista" SVP-Brand Management Group.**

3 YEARS WARRANTY 100,000 Price* starts at only ₱359,000
*FOB Manila

SUZUKI

Two suspected bank robbers killed in QC shootout

MORE PATROL CARS TO FIGHT CRIME

Manila Mayor Lito Atienge entrusts PNP chief Director General Jesus Razon Jr. (left) an City Hall where the former turned over 19 new police cars to the city police yesterday morning.

By Jeannette I. Andrade

TWO MEN WERE KILLED while three others—a police man and two bystanders—were injured in a shootout at a busy intersection in Quezon City yesterday morning.

Quezon City Police District (QCPD) chief Senior Supt. Magtanggol Gatdula said the slain men, who have yet to be identified, were believed to be members of a robbery group that preyed on clients of different banks on Aurora Avenue.

Gatdula said a third man on board a motorcycle was able to escape and is now being sought by his men.

According to the QCPD chief, the three were about to stage a robbery when they were spotted by two policemen on patrol.

The incident happened at around 8:05 a.m. at the corner of Aurora Avenue and Landayan Street, Barangay Sacred, in New Manila.

The two policemen from the QCPD Galas Station 11 were on board a patrol car when they spotted three men who were "acting suspiciously."

One of them was on a motorcycle while the other two stood near him.

SPO4 Bonnie Cruz and PO2 Saner Abbas said they were about to approach the men when the trio suddenly ran away.

As the policemen gave chase, one of the three threw a grenade at the patrol car, hitting the windshield.

Fortunately, the explosive did not go off.

The chase, however, started firing at the fleeing pursuing them.

A bullet shattered the window on the driver's side, hitting Abbas in the arm.

Despite his injuries, Abbas and Cruz managed to fire back at the three men.

During the exchange of fire, a barangay watchman, Danny Sagmanes, and a 50-member Manibela, a bystander, were hit by stray bullets.

The shootout ended when two of the three suspected robbers fell down. The third, however, managed to escape on his motorcycle.

The two suspects died of multiple gunshot wounds while Abbas, Sagmanes and Manalo were brought by bystanders to a nearby hospital for treatment.

Some of the Crime Operatives recovered two .45 caliber pistols, a grenade and several assorted spent shells at the site of the shootout.

Fernando told to go slow on 'Agaw Manibela' Another . . .

From page A1

DID YOU KNOW

AS OF DECEMBER 2001, 305 public and private tertiary institutions/satellites/extensions existed in Metro Manila. In school year 2005 to 2006, there were more than 615,000 college students in the region.

DEPT. EDUCATION, Inquirer Research

By Jocelyn R. Uy

IT'S OKAY TO COME UP WITH creative ways to ease traffic, but not at the expense of commuters, the Commission on Human Rights yesterday told the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority.

CHR Chair Leila de Lima advised MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando to go slow on the agency's "Agaw Manibela" scheme, saying this would only compound traffic problems on Edsa and cause inconvenience to the public.

The new scheme allows MMDA traffic enforcers to take over the wheel of any passenger van that stays too long at loading and unloading areas on the major thoroughfare. Those passengers are then asked to alight from the vehicle, and their fares are returned to them by the bus conductors.

Buses are allowed only 30 seconds for stopping and picking up passengers.

"We salute them for being creative, but they should also take into consideration the rights of the vulnerable groups —the women, children, elderly and persons with disabilities—who depend on public transportation daily," De Lima said during a press conference.

She added that giving passengers only 30 seconds to ride or alight from a bus was unreasonable to depriving them of their right to safety, public and social services and the right against condescension.

The new scheme would also be a violation of the rights of bus drivers and operators, she pointed out.

"The scheme is tantamount to a deprivation of property without due process that may not pass the test of lawfulness," De Lima said.

The Bayan went first reported Sunday night in the mall's "Malls-U" area on the ground floor.

In just 15 minutes, the fire reached the fifth alarm as firefighters found it difficult to get into the building due to the thick smoke. The alarm has yet to be lowered at press time.

Authorities placed the initial estimate of damage to property at P25 million as arson investigators are still probing the cause of the fire.

"Last night, we began inside the establishment as Marianne Bianca.

The blaze was

Iraq demands 'very clear' US troop timeline

At least 15 killed, 71 wounded in wave of attacks across country

BAGHDAD—THE United States must provide a "very clear timeline" to withdraw its troops from Iraq as part of an agreement governing them in any beyond this year, Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zebari said on Sunday.

It was the strongest public assertion yet that Iraq is demanding a timeline. (AP, President George W. Bush has long insisted setting a firm schedule for pulling troops out of Iraq, although last month the White House began speaking of a general "time horizon" and "aspirational goals" to withdraw.

Iraq's leaders have become more confident of their ability to provide security as the country has become safer. But attacks which killed at least 15 people on Sunday, including a 23 soldiers, were a reminder it is still a violent place.

In an interview with Reuters, Zebari said the agreement, including the timeline, was "very close" and would probably be presented to the Iraqi parliament in early September.

Asked if Iraq would accept a timeframe that did not include dates for a withdrawal, Zebari said: "We, no. Definitely there has to be a very clear timeline."

"The talks are still ongoing. There's been a great deal of progress. The deal is very close. It is about to be closed," Zebari said of the agreements, which will replace a UN Security Council resolution authorizing the US presence, which expires at the end of this year.

Other hurdles include the powers of the US military to detain Iraqi citizens, and their immunity in conduct military operations, Zebari said.

"But many issues have really found compromises on all these issues."

He would not be drawn on the precise dates that Iraqi negotiators are seeking for withdrawal, saying the document was not yet final. He said talks have said they would like to see all US combat troops out by October 2010.

An agreement that included that date would require the Bush administration effectively to accept a timeline almost identical to the one proposed by Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama, who opposed the 2003 invasion.

"You may have many dates, but I caution you not to take any of those dates until you get the final document," Zebari said.

Iraq has taken an increasing, assertive stance in negotiations with the United States after Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki's forces scored military victories against militia groups this year, giving the government a confidence boost.

The high price of oil means the Iraqi treasury has more money for reconstruction projects than it says figure out how to spend, and violence is at a three-year low.

Still, US commanders say they worry that a hasty withdrawal could allow violence to resume.

An attack on Sunday involving a roadside bomb, a suicide bomber and small arms fire in the town Tuzkhurmatu, just north of Baghdad, killed a US soldier, four Iraqi civilians and wounded 23 people, including two American soldiers.

In Khanaqin, another town north of Baghdad, a suicide bomber blew up a bomb-laden minibus, killing three people and wounding at least 28. Five roadside bomb attacks in or near Baghdad on Sunday killed a total of seven people and wounded at least 35.

Iraqi politicians have been paralysed by a dispute over the northern city of Kirkuk, which Kurds claim as the capital of their autonomous homeland. The issues threaten to stoke ethnic tensions between the city's Kurds, Arabs and ethnic Turkmen. Reuters

Thaksin says he will not return home

AFGHAN workers removing an ornate 9th century mosque at Mes Aynak in the country and "undoubtedly one of the finest in the world of this period," in the Kabul province of Afghanistan. AP

BANGKOK—EXILED PREMIER THAKSIN Shinawatra on Monday said he would not return to Thailand to face graft charges but would instead remain in self-exile to pursue political interference in the justice system.

Thaksin, a billionaire telecoms tycoon turned politician, and his wife Pojaman both face a raft of corruption charges that were instigated by a military junta which overthrew him in September 2006.

After 18 months in self-imposed exile, Thaksin vowed to fight the charges against him in a high-profile homecoming in February, but said on Monday he would not do that from within Thailand.

"My wife and I will stay in England where democracy is more important," the 59-year-old former premier said.

"What happened to me and my family and my closest relatives resulted from efforts to get rid of me from politics."

Thaksin, who was first elected in 2001, survived unusual loss of "interfering in the justice process ... by the group of people who see me as their political enemy."

The former premier and his wife were in China over the weekend for the opening of the Beijing Olympics, and reports had circulated in Thailand that they would remain overseas as the graft cases mounted against them.

Pojaman was convicted on July 31 of tax evasion and released on bail, and the couple had been ordered to appear before the Supreme Court on Monday to defend themselves in a separate property case.

They had received special permission from the courts to travel abroad.

Thaksin returned to Thailand on July 21, and his wife joined him in Beijing on Thursday.

A former legal adviser close to Thaksin said they had both now flown to Britain, where Thaksin has a home and has spent most of his time since the coup.

"I expected everything would be better, that I might have a chance to prove my innocence and receive a fair trial when I returned to Thailand," Thaksin said. AFP

Pakistan intelligence helping Taliban, says Nato commander

KABUL—PAKISTAN'S INTELLIGENCE agency is helping the Taliban to prosecute an insurgency in Afghanistan that has seen a bloodiest hike in attacks in some areas this year, the Nato commander here said.

The number of foreign fighters, including Europeans, were also increasing, but while Nato's Internal Security Assistance Force (Isaf) still lacked the soldiers it needed, US Gen. David D. McKiernan said in a weekend interview.

"There certainly is a level of ISI complicity to the militant areas in Pakistan and organizations such as the Taliban," the four-star general said, refusing allegations by Afghan President Hamid Karzai and others.

"I can't say to what level of leadership that goes to but there are indications of complicity on the part of ISI... to the extent that they are facilitating those militant groups that cause us of the tribal areas in Pakistan."

Karzai has directly accused the ISI of fueling the unrest in Afghanistan, which sees near daily militant attacks, but Pakistan has rejected the claims.

McKiernan, who took command of the 53,000-strong Isaf here in June and who led US troops into Iraq in 2003, said the increase in attacks in Afghanistan is in part because Afghan and international troops have pushed into new areas.

Insurgents have also changed their tactics to operate in smaller groups carrying out more attacks while militant sanctuaries in Pakistan have been allowed to grow and are sending more fighters across the porous border.

"There are foreign fighters who are not from the Pakistan side that straddle the border and from which the Taliban, who were in government in Afghanistan between 1996 and 2001, are largely drawn.

"Unfortunately we see a higher number of non-Pakistan, non-Afghanistan fighters this year than the time last year," McKiernan said. AFP

US-led force kills 8 civilians in Afghanistan

KABUL—EIGHT CIVILIANS BEING held in a compound by Taliban militants were killed in an air strike by US-led troops during a battle that also left 25 rebel fighters dead, the Afghan government said on Sunday.

Militants had ambushed coalition troops in Nangarhar province on Sunday and then fled into a compound where they held "hostages" 11 civilians, including children, it said in a statement.

"Coalition troops rushed in close air support to engage the militants hiding in the structures. They did not have knowledge of the combatants in the buildings at that time," it said.

The statement did not say who the civilian victims were, but provincial police chief Jamal Gul said a child, an old man and youths were among the dead.

The coalition said that after the battle in Achin district, the US-led coalition troops searched the compound and discovered three survivors. They were taken to a coalition base for treatment.

"An anonymous eyewitness told coalition forces that the civilians tried to escape the compound, but the militants beat them and refused to let them leave," it said.

The scale of engagement it said also left 25 militants dead, the coalition said, adding that militants who had ambushed troops from the compound had used small-arms fire and rocket-propelled grenades.

The coalition statement cited Gul, the police chief, accusing the Taliban of taking "innocent civilians" hostage, taking them by force to attack Afghan and coalition forces."

"If civilians get killed during these attacks, the responsibility falls on the Taliban and their terrorist sponsors," he was quoted as saying.

Mounting civilian casualties caused by international forces who were sent to Afghanistan in the wake of the Taliban's seven years ago have angered Afghans including President Hamid Karzai. AFP

The man behind the fateful Edwards meeting with the woman and her baby

NEW YORK—IT WAS THE ID-ventive that would unintentionally have former Sen. John Edwards' extramarital affair into full public view: a visit last month with the woman and her baby in her room at a hotel in Beverly Hills, Calif., where Edwards was confronted by reporters for the National Enquirer as he tried to leave the building.

At the center of that new lurid episode was Rielle McGovern, a California resident described as a spiritual healer of 20 years and a friend and former associate of the women with whom Edwards has admitted having the affair, Rielle Hunter.

In an interview on Friday with ABC's "Nightline," during which Edwards acknowledged that he once had a relationship with Hunter, he said that McGovern was the one who reached out to him to arrange the July 21 meeting with her and that he was in the hotel room when it happened that night.

But little is known about McGovern, who is 64, according to records, and lives with his wife in a modest, ranch-style home in a blue-collar section of San Bernardino, Calif. The website Bluguruswest.com, which promotes spirituality and New Age practices, recently carried a brief biography of McGovern, describing him as "an intuitive" and "a healer since 1980" who has worked "with energy in the area of the emotional Body."

In the interview, Edwards explained that he had been in Los Angeles on the day of the meeting with Hunter to participate in an event at which I was neighbor Antonio R. Villaraigosa, when he received an afternoon call from McGovern.

Edwards said that he decided to visit with Hunter because he did not want her to go public about their affair, less than he told McGovern that he would only show up if he was present at the meeting.

McGovern's role in the Beverly Hillton episode has added to the myriad questions surrounding Edwards' involvement in his affair with Hunter, who had filmed a number of short videos for Edwards' political action committee, One America, in 2006. Among those questions is whether McGovern helped in some way with the filming.

Edwards's aides have said that he told McGovern that he would only show up if he was present at the meeting.

McGovern's role in the Beverly Hil

The WORLD

Editor Lulvenne B. Sison

Russia steps up attacks on Georgia

TBILISI—RUSSIA INTENSIFIED ATTACKS ON Georgia on Monday, the Tbilisi government said, ignoring appeals for a ceasefire and US diplomatic warnings.

After taking control of Georgia's breakaway region of South Ossetia, Russian warplanes carried out fresh bombing raids in Georgia, Georgia's foreign ministry said.

With Russia saying more than 2,000 people have been killed, Europe-led diplomatic efforts to end the conflict with the French and Finnish foreign ministers holding talks in Tbilisi on Monday ahead of a meeting with Russia's President Dmitry Medvedev in Moscow on Tuesday.

US President George W. Bush, Georgia's strongest western ally, told Russia's Prime Minister Vladimir Putin that the Russian offensive was "disproportionate." "More than 30 Russian warplanes are flying over Georgia. Tbilisi was bombed. Bombs hit the village of Kojori and Mtskheta mountains," the foreign ministry in Tbilisi said.

Russian planes hunted radars at Tbilisi airport and hit civilian targets in the Georgian city of Gori, an interior ministry spokesperson said.

Russian planes had already bombed a special forces base and an air traffic control center in the Tbilisi suburbs, the spokesperson said.

Three Russian soldiers were killed and another 19 wounded by Georgian forces in South Ossetia on Monday, despite Georgia saying it had withdrawn its forces, Russia's Interfax news agency quoted a South Ossetian spokesperson as saying.

Russia, which has already moved battleships in the Black Sea, is preparing to deploy 9,000 troops in Ingushetia to create a second separatist Georgian region, Abkhazia, a military spokesperson was quoted as saying by Interfax.

It will also send more than 350 armored vehicles to add to what is officially a Russian peacekeeping force in the breakaway region, Russian spokesperson Alexander Mesiky said.

Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili said late Sunday that Russian tanks were on Georgian territory outside South Ossetia. The interior ministry said a "massive" aerial bombardment of the center of Gori was taking place.

"Gori is being bombed massively from the air and from artillery as well," said the spokesperson, who added that the government had reports that Russian troops and tanks were preparing a ground attack.

Moscow said it had sent a Georgian armed vessel and taken control of most of South Ossetia from Georgian forces. The Russian foreign ministry said Georgia still had soldiers and tanks in the area however.

Russia pursued its offensive despite Georgia saying it had ceded its push on South Ossetia.

"Georgia expresses its readiness to immediately start negotiations with the Russian Federation on a ceasefire and termination of hostilities," an official Georgian statement said.

Russia disputed this, however, with the commander of the Russian peacekeepers in South Ossetia saying they had come under attack by Georgian forces again early Monday.

"In certain zones (near Tskhinvali) Russian peacekeepers can start active confrontation" overnight, Major Kulakhmetov told news for.

Bush said on Monday he had told Putin that the violence in Georgia was "unacceptable."

Vice President Dick Cheney told Saakashvili in a telephone conversation that Russian aggression must not go unanswered."

The French and Finnish foreign ministers devised their earlier push for a ceasefire with the Russian leadership in Tbilisi on Sunday in separate mediation efforts.

"We must find the means for an immediate ceasefire, accepted by both sides," Kouchner told reporters after meeting with Saakashvili.

The European Union finalized plans calls for an immediate ceasefire, mediated across its ranks, controlled withdrawals of troops on both sides and eventual political talks.

The two ministers were to meet Medvedev in Moscow, where French President Nicolas Sarkozy was also due to arrive.

European Union foreign ministers are to hold a crisis meeting to discuss the bloc's response to the conflict on Wednesday in Brussels, an EU source said.

Russia sent thousands of troops, tanks and air support into South Ossetia on Friday after Georgia launched an offensive to seize control of the province, which broke from Georgia in the early 1990s.

The conflict had already forced about 40,000 people from their homes to areas around the conflict zone, the International Committee of the Red Cross said.

South Ossetia, a patchwork of ethnic Georgian and Ossetian settlements in the mountainous north of the country, has a population of about 70,000, many of whom have been granted Russian passports. AFP

SIGNS of a conflict expanding into an all-out war—Russian troops [top photo] heading toward the border of Georgia on Aug. 10. At right, a former Georgian resident squats in front of his home that was damaged by bomb attacks in Gori, some 80 km from Tbilisi, on Aug. 11. AFP/EPA

Retreating to safety, Georgian soldiers seethe at the West

NORTH Korean leader Kim Jong-il (center) visits a military unit in a recent picture released by KCNA on Aug. 11. AFP/KCNA

GORI, GEORGIA—IN RETREAT, the Georgian soldiers were so tired they could not keep from stumbling. Their arms were loaded with rucksacks and ammunition boxes; they had dark circles under their eyes. Officers ran up and down the line, hushing for them to go faster.

All of the soldiers were grim. Old men pushed wheelbarrows loaded with bags, or led cows by tethers. They drove tractors and rickety Ladas packed with mattresses and televisions.

The soldier, his face a mask of exhaustion, recalled a Kalashnikov.

"We killed as many of them as we could," he said. "But where are our friends?"

It was the question of the day. As Russian forces massed Sunday on two fronts, Georgians were heading south with whatever they could carry. Where they met Western journalists, they all said the same thing. Where is the United States? Where is Nato coming?

Since the conflict began, Western leaders have worked frantically to broker a ceasefire. But for Georgians—so boisterously pro-American that Tbilisi, the capital, has a George W. Bush Avenue—diplomacy fell far short of what they expected.

Meanwhile, the influx of Ossetians into southern Russia continued on Sunday, as the police secured convoys of townhouses up the Zarskaidi highway and through the mountain tunnel that is the only route into Russia.

The Russian authorities announced then 34,000 refugees had crossed the border, and 3,000 more evacuations were planned for Monday.

Pyotr Savchuk, who fled the violence with his daughter Oksana on Sunday, stood by a dusty dirt road.

"The biggest problem here is you, your country," he said. "You said that the Soviets were an evil empire, but it's you that are the empire.

"You run personally, of course," he added. "But your government."

In recent years, Bush has lavished praise on Georgia—and the so-called Rose Revolution that brought President Mikheil Saakashvili to office—as a symbol of democracy-building. The feeling was mutual: When Bush visited Tbilisi in 2005, the authorities estimated that 150,000 people thronged up to see him. Those exuberant days seemed very distant around Gori on Sunday as people fled.

The grimmest among the Georgians were the soldiers, haggard, unshaven and swinging their Kalashnikovs. One, who gave his name as Major Georgi, spoke with anger.

"We're exactly what I say," he said. "Over the past few years, I lived in a democratic society. I was happy. And now America and the European Union are spitting on us." AFP

Rice: US won't delist North Korea as yet

TOKYO—US SECRETARY OF State Condoleezza Rice told Japan that Washington would not remove North Korea from a US list of state sponsors of terrorism on the initial deadline of Monday, Japanese Foreign Minister Masahiko Komura said.

The White House had made clear that it did not expect a deal with Pyongyang by Monday for presenting a verification plan for its nuclear programs, but it had said talks would continue.

The delay was likely to be welcome in Japan, where many are concerned that an easing of US sanctions against Pyongyang would lessen Tokyo's chances of settling a feud over its citizens abducted by North Korean agents decades ago.

Japanese and North Korean officials on Monday began two days of talks in the northeastern Chinese city of Shenyang on the abductions, an event Rice dines in Japan and a major obstacle to establishing diplomatic ties between Tokyo and Pyongyang.

Komura told reporters that Rice had informed him of the delay in the delisting in a telephone conversation.

Washington has promised North Korea it could be removed from a US list of terrorism-sponsoring states as early as Aug. 11 if a robust verification plan were in place, but US officials hinted they viewed this more as a "minimum timeline" rather than a fixed date.

Removal from the sanctions blacklist would be an end to US sanctions that have mostly cut off North Korea from international banking, and would also clear the way for multibillion-dollar aid packages. Reuters

In Beijing, a stabbing rooted in despair

By Andrew Jacobs

BEIJING—TANG YONGBING was like countless other middle-aged, marginally skilled men struggling to find their way in the new China. Laid off from a rusty factory in the eastern city of Hangzhou, Tang, 47, lived by odd jobs and by his wife's paltry salary as a university guard. Then, two years ago, he found himself idle, broke and living alone in a rented room with no furniture and no future.

Friends and former co-workers said he was unstable, annoyed and unable to find his footing in China's surging economy.

But even though Tang had moments of despair and frustration, those who knew him were at a loss to explain why he attacked a couple of American tourists and three Chinese passers-by Saturday, fatally stabbing a 62-year-old man and slashing the others before leaping to his death from the balcony of the Drum Tower, one of Beijing's best-known historic monuments.

Todd Buchanan, a Minnesota businessman whose son-in-law coaches the men's volleyball team, was killed. His wife, Barbara, 62, was critically wounded, as was the guide, whose name has not been released.

President Hu Jintao, meeting on Sunday with President George W. Bush, expressed condolences to the victims and their families and said the police would fully investigate. "The Chinese side takes this extremely serious incident very seriously," he said.

Tang had an criminal record, investigators said.

On the outskirts of Hangzhou, where Tang spent most of his life, neighbors and former co-workers said he was often disgruntled and prone to arguments. He grumbled a great deal, very cynical," Zhang Ligeng, a former colleague, said. "He had an unyielding touch."

They agreed that Tang typified the many working men cast aside by ailing state-run industries. "He had a quick temper and was always complaining about society," said a former coworker, who would only give his nickname, Aqing.

Jiang Beiqun, his landlord, said Tang paid $53 a month for an unfurnished room. According to Jiang and other tenants, Tang seemed to own only one shirt and a single pair of pants, both of which he washed by hand at night. He had no job, they said, and often slept late into the day.

Last week, Tang announced he was leaving town. According to the police, he called his son that evening and told him he would not be returning until he found success. AFP

HAYES DEAD AT 65

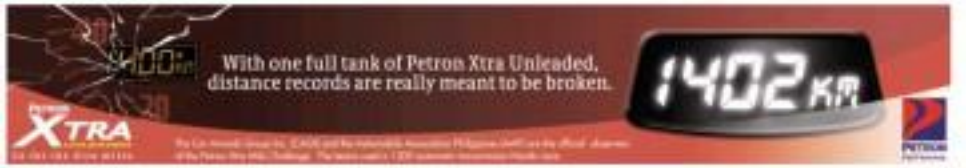
Chart-winning soul singer Isaac Hayes died in Memphis on Sunday, aged 65, his label Stax in Memphis said. AFP

WHAT'S INSIDE
Harrington rallies, takes PGA crown by two shots /A23

SPORTS

Lito Teddyvic S. Melendres Assistant Lito Francis T.J. Ochoa

BY SCHEDULE | Aug. 12, Tuesday
SWIMMING (National Aquatics Stadium)
1:32 a.m.—400SEL MEDLEY Men's 200-meter Individual Medley Final 2
BY VENUE (1)
Aug. 10
SHOOTING (Beijing Shooting Range)
DISC GOLF—Final placing Time Set: 32nd to 35th place, men's individual leg
All a.m.



Walsh cracks barrier

By Ted S. Melendres
Sports Editor

BEIJING—FILIPINO-AMERICAN SWIMMING Stars Walsh went down in history as the first freshman Asian to go under the psychological two-minute barrier in the 200-meter butterfly and Miss Holidyn Diaz muscled her own national record Monday in a pair of resounding Philippine performances on the fourth day of the Beijing Olympics here.

Walsh, the 21-year-old pre-medicine scholar at the University of Florida, clocked one minute and 59.99 seconds to topping the second of seven heats of the event fronted over by American superstar Michael Phelps as the National Aquatics Center.

The first of the Filipino swimmers to see action here examine his old record of 2:00.42 which he set at the US Senior National Swimming Championships last year.

Spain's Jaime Nunez followed Walsh home in 2:00.24 with Argentina's Andres Jose Gonzalez third in 2:00.56.

The Filipino failed to advance to the 20-man semifinals, though, as his clocking was good only for 29th place.

A total of 44 swam the 100m butterfly, with world record-holder Phelps heading the qualifiers with a new Olympic standard of 1:53.70.

"That was a magnificent swim by JR (Walsh's nickname)," said Mark Joseph, the president of the national swimming association.

Walsh was more than four seconds quicker than his SEA Games rival Donny Dadiangas from Indonesia who timed 2:03.44.

Diaz smashed her national record total in the women's 58-kilogram class of weightlifting but could do no better than land in 11th place in an elite field of 12.

The Zamboanga lass, at 17 the youngest and greatest member of the 15-athlete Philippine squad, lifted 102 kg on a snatch of 83 kg and an 88 record 187 kg in the clean-and-jerk.

That total improved by 2 kg the old mark of 180 she set in last year's Southeast Asian Games in Thailand, though it fell way short of the medalists' lifts.

Diaz managed 107 kg on her last attempt in the clean-and-jerk, surpassing her old 98 record of 105 kg missing her personal target of 110 as the standing seven-only Beijing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics gymnasium.

To underscore the strength of the opposition, five women lifted a total of 228 or better—the most in three Olympics, according to the sport's international federation—with Chinese world record holder and defending champion Chen Yanqing setting an Olympic standard of 244 kg to run away with the gold medal.

Chen had a snatch of 106 kg and a clean and jerk of 138 as she beat Russia's Marina Shainova to the silver, 227 (98-129). South Korea's O Jong-ae bagged the bronze on 206 (95-111).

"Nabuwag nanaman ang isolohon (The competition was amazingly strong)," said Diaz, the daughter of a tricycle driver who now serves here as a solid core, on the invitation of the international federation.

Team Philippines chief of mission Rep. Monico Puentevella, also the president of the national weightlifting association, said Diaz showed her readiness to compete at the 2012 London Olympics.

"I'm proud of her for breaking the national record," said Puentevella. "I believe she's good for three more Olympics, having long training stay-stayover (if she doesn't get married soon)."

Diaz and Walsh were the second and third Filipinos to bow out of the Olympics after shotgun marksman Trev Sing, who wound up dead last in a field of 35 at the end of the men's trap competition Sunday at the Beijing Shooting Range.

Archer Mark Javier, the only other Filipino to see action in these Games Sunday, set up a knockout duel with Chinese Taipei's Yuan Cheng-wei in Wednesday's round-of-32 of the men's 10m 70-meter event.

GIVING IT HER BEST SHOT Filipina Holidyn Diaz makes a successful take in the women's 58kg Group A match weightlifting competition at the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games. AP, FILE

'I'll come back and beat them'

By Ted S. Melendres

BEIJING—TRAMPLED IN A FAILED FIRST attempt at a lighter weight, Holidyn Diaz looked at her hands intently as she made her way to the lifters' hall at the back of the brightly lit stage.

The comely 17-year-old knew she had missed her target in the clean and jerk. It's the one thing she had fervently wanted to achieve in the Beijing Olympics here.

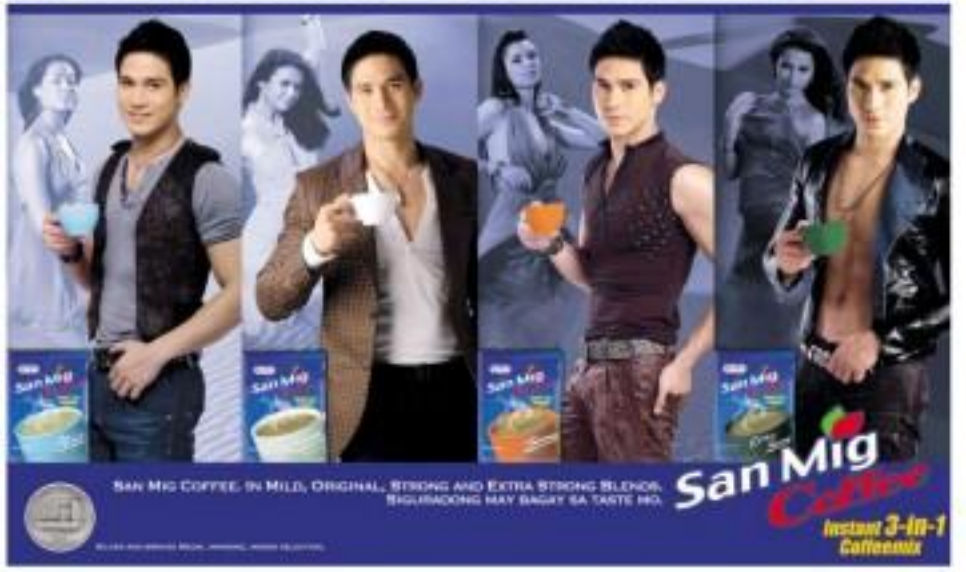
"Okay ang *performance* ko, pero nalungkot ako dahil hindi ko naabot ang target ko (I performed well, but I'm disappointed as not having reached my target)," said Diaz, who successfully lifted 102 kg on her second try but couldn't make the third attempt more than 107.

She wanted a shot at 110 kg but risked failure and injury if she overextended herself, she said.

The 107 kg that she managed actually broke her own national record by 2 kg and gave her a new total lift mark of 192 kg, the match of 83 kg in the first half of the competition at the Beijing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics gymnasium.

FILIPINO

ProGear Golf
433 Shaw Blvd., Mandaluyong
Ayala Center, Makati City
SALE TIME CAMERA
RAINY DAY SALE

MAS MASARAP 'PAG MAY CHOICES.


SAN MIG COFFEE IN MILD, ORIGINAL, STRONG AND EXTRA STRONG BLENDS. SIGURADONG MAY BAGAY SA TASTE MO.
San Mig Coffee
Instant 3-in-1 Coffeemix

CHECKLIST: She can be beaten

Dennis, Django share 3rd in Million Dollar tilt

HUEPECO STAR DENNIS ORCOLLO YIELDED to former world 10-ball champion American **Rune Tec Fleming**, 13-8, in the semifinals and settled for joint third place with Frenchie "Django" Personnaz in The 9-Ballers Dollar 9-Ball Shootout on Sunday at the Mills Pride Convention Center in Birmingham, USA.

The debut standout Orcollo, currently the world's top player, his fourth consecutive year so far settled for the losing semifinalists' purse of $100,000 Lifted $440,000) with fleming, who bowed to American Corey Deuel, 13-6, in the other match.

Yet, fleming routed Deuel, 13-7, in the finals to rule the 12-man, five-day event and pocket the top prize of $20,000. Deuel took the $12,000 runner-up purse.

"The ball didn't go my way," said Orcollo, who had won the Quezon City 9-Ball Championship, the Japan Open and the Taiwan International 9-Ball title earlier this year.

"But I'm still happy because I played well overall in this event, which I hope I can carry into my next tournament," added Orcollo, stalwart of the star-studded Rugby Pronvobran of Instituto para Petty Martinez.

Orcollo's near step in his two-week US sojourn would've be his second Grand Slam of Champions, a $50,000 winner-take-all event featuring eight of the world's best players slated Aug. 14 and 15 at the Mohegan Sun Casino in Uncasville, Connecticut.

The 20-year-old Orcollo came into the knockout stage as the top seed, having won five of his six first round matches and accumulated the most number of racks won (93 out of 150) from among the 12 entries.

But that didn't give the pride of Bulig, Sarigaya del Sur, any advantage as the tournament shifted to a do-or-die format.

In the Challenge of Champions, Orcollo will pit skills with world No. 2 and defending champion Karlo Bojino of the Netherlands, reigning world 9-ball king Darryl Peach of England, Sun Shuming, Fu Jiaolei of China, Chang Jung-lin of Chinese Taipei, Satoshi Kawahara of Japan and Seung Woo-Ryu of Korea.

Bombers, Lions clip 'NC' rivals

By Jasmine N. Payo

IT WAS A BRIDGER FOR JOHN REGAL AND A TIED GOALIE FOR DAN finds yesterday in the NCAA men's basketball competition at the Cuneta Astrodome.

The JRU Bombers rolled to a 20-point lead at halftime then survived for an 87-80 win over the Ateneo Blue Eagles for their seventh straight victory to a second entering 7-2 card.

The NBC Red Lions needed a clutch three-pointer in the final minute from Peng Taulfred to a 73-67 win over a Philippine Christian University squad missing its main cons.

Baraboi turned a slim 67-65 San Beda lead to 70-65 with 1:14 minutes left and the Lions went on to improve their record to 6-3 behind the Bombers.

The Lions unpredictably struggled even as the first-place played without fifth-year center Jeff Viernes, who served a one-game suspension.

"We haven't practiced well and after our close games (the past week), I challenged them to win this game convincingly," said JRU coach Ariel Vanguardia. "We regained the team's sharpness after yesterday's practice."

Veteran center James Sena got the Bombers going by burning 12 of his 16 points in the first half to lead the Bombers to a 20-point advantage, 42-22, at the break.

Mark Caguio added 16 points, three assists and three steals as the Bombers posted a 4-0 win-loss record in two games on the Blazers.

"It's hard to beat a team with nothing to lose," said San Beda coach Frankie Lim. "They were trying to scratch-free, I have to give credit to their coach and players."

Nigerian center Sam Ikwe paced the Lions with 22 markers, 16 rebounds and two blocks, while Baraboi posted 19 points, eight rebounds and three assists.

"That was a big shot by Peng," said Lim of Baraboi, who recently turned 25 years old. "He made good decision, he has a good disposition."

The Dolphins stayed dead last at 1-8.

"It's hard to keep a streak," admitted San guard-ila a week after narrowly beating collan shedding Perpetual Help and PUL.

For the game was marred by the ejection of JRU swingman John Villeza and Jo. Bordido's techs (next).

Villeza, who helped built the Bombers' early lead with 10 points, was ejected in a scuffle with David so they battled for the re-bound in the last 30 seconds of the first half.

The Junior Blazers earlier impressive 6-0 by edging the Light Bombers, 99-91.

Second Game (Jrs)

JRU (99) – Capacio 31, Sena 16, Mina 10, Ilgos 9, Tenorio 7, Balangue 7, Salangsang 7, Ramos 6, Montemayor 4, Lopez 2, Nuñez 2, Ilgos 2, Galanzel.

SF (91) – Dionisio 31, Alfonso 19, Bañares 9, Bello 8, Obena 6, Baral 6, Dela Pena 5, Montecastro 5, Martinez 2, Wong 2, Nicolas 2, Rivera 2, Pascua 2, Ramos 2, Lanuza 0, Dakay 0.

Quarters: 23-12, 42-35, 69-61, 99-91.

Third Game (Jrs)

JRU (83) – Tolentino 22, Umali 19, Pascual 12, Gonzalez, Tuazon 8, Gervacio 6, Mina 5, Rivera 2, Manalo 2, Caguioa 0.

PCU (82) – Jacquier 32, Garcia, Vital 15, Ibanez 8, Millay 8, Ilao 5, Ruiz 2, Lanuza 2, Sanchez, Calma 0.

Quarters: 19-10, 28-20, 67-55, 73-82

SET TOP CHOICES
At Santa Ana Park

Race 1 – (Purple/Gold Cap) White Pink, Purple/Blue (Jaguio, Ramos, Ilagan, Ilagan, Ilagan

BRITISH CHAMP WINS AGAIN

Harrington rallies, takes PGA crown by two shots

ELOOMFIELD TOWNSHIP, MICHIGAN—Everyone wondered who would fill the void with Tiger Woods recuperating and out of the last two majors.

The answer became pretty clear after Ireland's Padraig Harrington overcame a three-shot deficit to coolly roll in a 15-foot birdie putt on the 17th hole and a 15-footer for par on 18 to pull away from Sergio Garcia and Boo Weekley and win the PGA Championship on Sunday.

In a flexing follow-to-winning his second straight British Open three weeks ago, the Irishman became only the fourth player—and first European—to win the claret jug and the Wanamaker Trophy in the same year. He also became the first European to win the PGA Championship since Tommy Armour of Scotland in 1930.

"I really do like the fact that no other European has won [three] two majors consecutively," Harrington said after the stirring finish. "Serious Unbelievably hold a lot of European players that I get up top yesterday. It's unbelievable. I believe that I achieved something that they hadn't it very special."

How he did it was very special as well.

Marathon finish

He started Sunday's final round—part of a marathon day because the third-round rain-pushed back by rain—three shots behind Garcia. He won in third place starting the back nine and was a shot behind Garcia with three holes to play.

But just as he had in winning his second straight British Open last month at Royal Birkdale, he shot a 32 on the back nine. While Garcia and Garcia, still much with the morale of "how players in the world without a major," never hit a shot to separate themselves down the stretch, Harrington was solid.

He nailed a 15-foot putt for par on the 16th to pull even with Garcia and Garcia, then took the lead with the birdie on the par-3 17th. A momentum, Garcia was faced with a 6-footer to tie him, but missed it.

On the closing hole, which gave up only one birdie all day and that was on a shot from the fairway by Steve Stadler, Harrington had one more bit of magic left in his putter. He barely escaped a fairway bunker, then made a stellar shot from deep rough to get on the green. He made the 15-footer to close out Garcia and clinch a two-shot victory.

Another title!

"I know I lost the idea of the back nine of a major of Sunday," Harrington said. "I knew it so much I'm actually disappointed I'm [eight] months away from the next major."

He is Winnth, who is back in Florida recuperating from knee surgery that cost him the rest of the season after he won the U.S. Open in dramatic fashion in June. Woods wasn't anywhere close to Oakland Hills, but it's likely he'll still assess that Harrington is challenging his status as the man to beat coming down the stretch of a major.

Out of sync

That's not the case with Garcia, who always seems snakebit when in the thick of a major championship. He was tied for the lead with Curtis when his tee approach to the 15th green that hit the pin, slid down the shaft, dumped into the bottom of the hole—and then ricocheted 10 feet away. Two putts later, he had a par instead of something truly memorable on the way to a major victory.

"There's guys that get a little bit bitter sweet. They get in contention in a major and manage to get things going their way either because they play well or because somebody else comes back," said Garcia, who is now 0-for-38 in majors. "Unfortunately, it hasn't happened to me."

Almost as impressive as the way Harrington played in the final few holes was that he came into the weekend saying he was tired and out of sync. So he played 27 grueling holes Sunday and finished with consecutive 66s.

He raised alone at 2-under 277. Garcia (68) and Garcia (71), who led by three shots after birdieing the first hole, shared second at 279. Camilo Villegas, who closed out rounds of 62 and 68 on Sunday, shared fourth place with Henrik Stenson (72) at 281.

Garcia could console himself with the fact that he's already got a major (2001 British Open) and that the Irish native has his first berth on a U.S. Ryder Cup team, 305 points to Valhalla. Woods won't be there.

AP

PADRAIG Harrington celebrates after sinking the shot that gave him the crown.

Ababa, six others seek four Putra Cup berths

THE BATTLE FOR BERTHS IN THE four-man national team for the Putra Cup begins today with Yonnie Astalio and Ronnel Ababa leading the host among seven aspirants at the Mt. Malarayat Golf and Country Club in Lipa, Batangas.

Astalio is coming off a big runner-from-behind win in the Bay Regional Championship in California two weeks ago while Ababa is fresh from a victory in the Gold leg of the Samsung Asia-cup Tour in Ayeboldale last week.

The four-day tournament also serves as a duel between the RTK and Cabuyao-based bets.

Astalio heads the RTK team that includes Stefino Barrios and reigning national champion Pedro Azurao and Ababa is at the helm of the Cabuyao group with Mark Fernando and Jonie Balandres.

Erwin Vinluan is the seventh player in the cast. The Villanos bet is aiming to prove his worth for another crack at the national squad.

A member of the 2005 Nestcafe Cup team, Vinluan finished a strong fourth in the amateur division of the qualifier conducted by the National Golf Association of the Philippines at the Valley Golf Club.

Fernando topped the eliminations, followed by Barrios, Astalio, Ababa, Azurao and Balandres.

Azurao is actually seeded into the final elimination as winner of the RP Amateur set in Bacolod.

The top four finishers will make up the RP team competing in the Putra Cup to Singapore on Aug. 25-29.

The top five ladies in the event's national elimination will also dispute the three berths in the RP squad vying action in the World Amateur in Australia in October.

The RP team hopefuls are Cyna Bautista, Cleibie Dacia, back-to-back RP Amateurs champion Anya Tanpinco, Leonie Maiado and former RP Ladies Open titlist Gemalenn Villanueva.

JHONNEL Ababa

Phone Pals eyeing 2nd Fil-Am tyro

By Jaarvion W. Paya

A DAY AFTER WELCOMING EXPRESSIVE to interview is rookie Gabe Norwood of the Houston Rockets, Talk 'N Text Phone Pals coach Siot Tanquingcen is already eyed another Filipino-American as its second draftee to the PBA draft set on Aug. 31 at Market! Market! in Taguig.

"We'll get whoever Welcome doesn't pick," said team manager Frankie Lim after Ice Phone Pals entered the second and fourth selections.

The Phone Pals are similarly looking at Richmond—the versatile 6-foot-5 guard who starred for the Philippine team—and David Dillinger, a 6-foot-10 Fil-Am point guard playing for the Pennsylvania Builders in the Liga Filipina.

"There are still so many what-ifs, what if Norwood and Dillinger don't make it," said Lim of their top two choices, "that's why we complete the draft requirements for foreign players with Filipino roots.

"We have our top five. We're also looking at [Jason] Castro, [Sebastien] Mercado and Pang [Dacoled]. They're all 6-2 guards. Even if we need a big man, there's no big man in the lineup. Everybody can play 1 to 3 spot [small forward] and a point guard."

Magnolia got the third and eighth picks, while Alaska earned the No. 5 selection.

Powerhouses will either choose ninth or seventh, depending on ARQ's fate in the ongoing Smart Piatco Conference finals against Barangay Ginebra.

And Bull picks ninth, followed by Philippine Cup champion Sta. Lucia.

RP runners join climbathon

A HEFTY GROUP OF CLOSE TO 40 PH-spine runners and mountaineers from Metro Manila, Davao, and Cebu, led by last year's top line '10 Bataan Manila duke from Cebu, will be among the international and competing in the 22nd Mt. Kinabalu International in Malaysia on Aug. 23-24. Dubbed as the event's longest mountain race, the 21K race will take participants to the top of the more than 4,000-meter high peak. The highest mountain in South East Asia.

Bacolod softbelles, Illam batters lose; junior squad plays Canada

By Cudell P. Tigas

PORTLAND, OREGON—THE QUESTION was a little complex and convoluted. How can this Philippine team then-name the Asia-Pacific tournament yet hardly look like champion squad that is in the Little League World Series here?

The answer resides exactly with Benjamin.

"I don't know what's happening to the team," the coach said after the Philippine were shut out for the second straight game preventing hosting to USA [Central, 6-0, at the Alpenrose Field.

The Philippines' losing spell continued in Bangor, Maine, where the International Little League of Manila suffered a 5-3 defeat to Hawaii, which represented US-West.

The girls from Bacolod City made it... field owners look like it was their habit. And although they loaded the bases twice, they were still stuffed at last, hitting just 4-for-19.

As if to put emphasis on the team's woes, catcher Judy Ann Cuizon was tagged out where she missed the third base long, making the Philippines' runs at the bottom of the third inning when they loaded the bases twice.

"I hope they keep their faces because we still have an outside chance [of making the semifinals]," added Benjamin.

The Baseball belles will play a three-his Korea today against Italy at 10 a.m. today (1 a.m. in Manila) and US-Scandinavia 2 p.m. (3 a.m. in Manila).

US-Greenville scored three runs each in the third and sixth innings against second-string pitcher J-Randal Andrada, who gave up eight hits.

Third-choice Nancy Benjamin was not allowed to play because of the pitchers' one-game rest rule.

Benjamin will pitch against US. Smith, while shortstop Bea Mae Dela Cruz will be converted to pitcher against Italy.

The Ilam batters, who are known for coming back in the late innings, nearly did the trick again as Adrian Bernardo sent Chip Taguiwalo home with a single at the bottom of the first inning.

Gerald Mina's single paved the way for Mike Dizon to reach home to clinch the defeat to two runs. But Lloyd Calingasan and Indigo Olivares were forced out at home to end the Ilam rescuers.

Ilam also to human look against host Mother Dayton 7-to-5 p.m. today (3 a.m. Tuesday in Manila).

Another Ilam team will start its quest for the Junior League Baseball World Series crown against Canada at 2 p.m. today (2 a.m. Tuesday in Manila) in Taylor, Michigan.

La Salle-Ateneo clash opens Razon Cup

THE CREAM OF THE CROP OF PHILippine football converge in the 2nd Tony Razon Cup. Filipino 2008, the biggest tournament of the year which kicks off on Sunday at the stadium in Manila Ecumenical in Quezon City.

An exciting two-game bill featuring Philippine Air Force versus Manila Ateneo at 1 p.m. and Ateneo de Manila against collegiate rival De La Salle Univ 4 p.m. would usher in the annual event participated in by 40-some clubs and schools.

Henry Greater Raya Football Club opens its back-to-back title bid when it takes on University of the Philippines on Aug. 18.

The event is being held in memory of Tony Razon, the late of RTSC magnate Kinky Razon and mother of RP football great Freddy Razon Gonzales and former goalie Christian Ramos Gonzales.

The top two teams in the two-month long tournament will advance to the national men's finals in November in Bonifacio City.

Sta Eustaces U and University of Santo Tomas are also scheduled to meet on Aug. 28.

TIMMY Razon

Lithuanian MVP to miss Manila Invt'l

LITHUANIAN CENTER DONONIS Marcinkevicius, Most Valuable Player of the recent FIBA-Asia Youth championship, will not be coming for the Nokia Manila Youth Basketball International tournament starting this Thursday at the Amoranian, reportedly due to an injury.

Despite the 7-foot-1 dominant absence, the Lithuanian still boast of three other 7-foot players and are still favored to take the rampant four more contest also featuring the RP Youth team and the national youth squads of China and Chinese-Taipei.

"We've been told that Donatas has been injured and will not be able to join the trip," RSB-Something Basketball tag team director Jimmy Gimenez of Manila said yesterday. "But we still have to contend with the giants of the other teams."

The national youth team, which won the South East Asia Basketball championship earlier this year, is using the event to toughen up for the FIBA Asia Under-18 Championship to Tehran, Iran, on Aug. 28 to Sept. 7.

The Philippines faces Lithuania on Aug. 14 at 8 p.m., shortly after the season-opening ceremony.

DILG. Salle Zobel's Bernice Ilgay (left) soars for a smash while teammate Christine Gruenpo looks on.

Lyceum, RTU, Miriam tossers still unbeaten

DEFENDING CHAMPION LYCEUM, Rizal Technological University and Miriam College blasted opposite opponents over the weekend to keep their records clean in the 10th WNCAA volleyball tournament at the RTU gym.

Lyceum swept World Citi Colleges, 25-20, 28-19, 25-18, and RTU downed Emilio Aguinaldo College, 25-18, 25-15, 25-13, to stay on top of Series A at 2-0.

In Senior B hostilities, Miriam bested host College of St. Benilde, 25-22, 25-13, 18-25, 25-23, to take pool a 2-0 slate.

De La Salle-Zobel, last year's subject champion, also defeated with a 25-13, 25-19 victory over St. Francis of Assisi College.

Defending juniors champion St. Scholastica's College was not so lucky though, bowing to San Beda College slateway, 25-21, 6-25.

Posting 1-1 seniors records are St. Scholastica which beat University of Asia & the Pacific, 25-19, 25-17, 22-25, 25-22, St. Francis of Assisi after mastering La Consolacion College Manila, 25-18, 25-21, 25-13, and Centro Escolar University, a 16-25, 25-17, 25-21, 25-16 winner over Philippine Women's University.

Other seniors results saw Miriam outlasting St. Francis of Assisi, 25-2, 25-8, 25-12; La Salle College Antipolo dominating Angelicum College, 25-11, 25-19, 25-22, and Philippine Women's surviving St. Stephen's High School, 25-19, 25-18, 17-25, 24-22.

SWITZERLAND'S Roger Federer reaches a return to Russia's Dmitry Tursunov. AP

Nadal, Federer swamp foes

BEIJING—RAFAEL NADAL MADE A successful defense of Olympic singles Monday, overcoming numerous missed chances by sweeping the No. 8 seed Tursunov best Pedro Sharapova of Italy, 6-2, 3-6, 6-2.

Top-seeded Roger Federer had an easier time. He began a bid for his first Olympic medal by beating Dmitry Tursunov, 6-4, 6-2.

Nadal played doubles but not singles at the Athens Olympics in 2004. He's playing both in Beijing, staying in the athletes' village and hoping to sustain a summer surge that has secured him of the No. 1 ranking next week.

"I am very happy to be here," Nadal said. "But trying to enjoy 100 percent the experience, and later try my best on court."

No. 4-seeded Serena Williams won all four games when her match resumed after an overnight wait to complete a rain-interrupted victory over Olga Govortsova of Belarus, 6-0, 6-1.

Like Nadal, Williams was playing her first singles match at the Olympics. She won a gold medal in doubles in 2000 with her sister Venus.

"It's a great thing going out there playing for your country," she said.

Williams said she decided against staying in the athletes' village because she likes privacy. Last week she visited the village, where she was a popular subject for those seeking photos and autographs.

"I was bombarded with lots of people," she said. "It was a lot. I can't count, but it was cool, I guess."

In men's play, Nicolas Massu of Chile opened his bid to repeat as Olympic champion by beating Steve Darcis of Belgium, 6-4, 7-5. Massu won gold a year at Athens in both singles and doubles.

Nadal played the 10:30 a.m. match on center court, and at times it appeared he needed a wake-up call. He struggled on the backhand side, and shook his head or rolled his eyes when usually reliable strokes misfired. AP

OLYMPIC BOXING

Harry braces for night fights

By Ted S. Meisenbres

BEIJING—HARRY TAVADZE HITS the bank in the afternoon and "fights" with his shadow at night.

The contenders of the country's lone boxing hope in the Games of the 29th Olympiad have is boosting nothing to chance, even approximating the hour in the evening when he climbs the ring on Wednesday to fight Ghana's Mensys Phraps.

"He is trying to simulate bouts by training in the evening for his four fights all the way to the semifinals," said Hilmary Lopez, the head of the national boxing association, of the 29-year-old world championship contender.

"He'll shift in afternoon, training when he gets into the finals."

Coaches Per Gaspi and Cuban Enrique Amoyave Tavare said Tavadze starts his light workouts by shadow-boxing after he gets up from his nap in the early evening.

Though he has not seen the 22-year-old Plunge Fight, Tavadze said he's ready to make quick adjustments during the fight.

Hope

"Mindi ko pa nakikita yung [Ghanian's] mga cho[-Ghanian]," he said. Hinahop "Hahaha na ang mga coaches ko sa akin! Dito coaches know what to do with me]."

Tavadze's shoulders the hope of ending the Philippines' two-Olympic-void medal drought in boxing, and of reasserting its proud tradition in the light flyweight class.

If he wins over the fighter from Accra, Tavadze will face the victor between Brandt's Cubbies Bob runner-up Pedro Carvalho and Morocco's Belkasem Bouchkara in the second round.

It will take five wins to secure the gold, three to land the bronze in Tavadze's 29-pig class.

Boxing's light flyweight class has been the Philippines' most bankable source of medals in the previous five Olympics. Marianito "Onyok" Velasco banded a silver in the 1996 Summer Games in Atlanta while Velasco's older brother Rusel and Leopoldo Serrano snatched a bronze each in 1992 in Barcelona and 1988 in Seoul, respectively.

IT'S STILL BOOKING, FOLKS! Vasyl Lomachenko (right), 2007 world championship silver medalist, of the Ukraine tries to free himself from a clinching cup said Akbert Sultanov of Russia during their featherweight bout. AP

Molina gets going, eyes RP record

By Ted Meisenbres

BEIJING—THE PHILIPPINES' PROUDEST modern Miguel Molina pace for no less than a new national record when he plunges into action Tuesday in the first of his two events at the Beijing Olympics here.

Molina, the best male athlete at last year's Southeast Asian Games, hits the water in the second of seven heats of the men's 200-meter breaststroke at the Water Cube, the decibel-drowned aquatics venue which has seen seven world record performances as of Monday noon.

The 24-year-old Athens Olympian enters the heats with the 45th fastest time of 2 minutes and 16.62 seconds among the event's 53 bracketmates.

The only Filipino bidder from a host squad of 15 with a second event, Molina competes against the likes of super tanker Michael Phelps and his American compatriot Ryan Lochte in the 200m individual medley on Wednesday.

"It's a good heat, there are swimmers faster than him," Mark Joseph, the president of the swimming association, said of Molina's eight-man squad. "I guess he'll improve his time."

Joseph said the SEA Games winner are today to get extra instructions from their American mentors who are also part of the coaching staff of the powerhouse United States team here. He mentioned two of the coaches as Dr. Dave Salo and Greg Troy.

With 28 Welch breaking his national record in the 200m freestyle on Monday night despite missing the semifinals, the challenger bids on Molina, long-distance freestyler Jessie Amboyo and 50m free sprinters Christel Simms and Daniel Coakley to likewise lower their respective RP records.

Amboyo competes in the first of five heats of the men's 1,500m free while Simms, a former member of the US junior team and Hawaii's most notable swimmer, was active in the sixth of 12 heats of the 50m free on Saturday.

Coakley vies for a quarterfinal slot in the heats of the 50m the next day.

Molina owns personal bests that ranked first in the pruned waters of Beijing's high-tech National Aquatics Center, though.

The long-haired veteran of three golds in the 2005 Manila SEA Games has an RP record of 2:03.22 in the 200 IM, about 0.8 seconds slower than Phelps' world record 1:54.88. His SP mark is the 200m breaststroke, meanwhile, is 9.11 seconds off the world-best 2:07.28 of Japan's Kosuke Kitajima.

Trained for three months by Beijing's Anthony Storey, a gold medalist in the 1998 Seoul Olympics, Molina will be happy to land in the middle rankings of his two highly-competitive specialties.

CUBA'S Misleydis Company (left) competes against Italy's Giovanna Trillini during the Women's individual foil elimination round of 32 match in the 2008 Beijing Olympics. AP

I'll come back . . .

From page A12

emotion and determination matched her foil standard.

Though admittedly awed by the competition, Diaz nevertheless left the jam-packed venue unbowed.

"Definitely the jury did not help me at all. They were all very strong but I still came where I'll catch up with them]," said the 18th of six children of a tricycle driver from Zamboanga. "Definitely also as inclusion to the city [I'll come back and beat them]."

With national weightlifting association chief and Bacolod Rep. Monico Puentevella rooting in usual for to cheer inner Olympics, the young Diaz may still get her wish.

Pacquiao in Olympic prime time

By Percy G. Della

SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA—HARDly minutes about it.

Manny Pacquiao's stint as the unrelated bronze of the Philippine team during the breathtaking opening ceremony of the Beijing Olympics paid dividends in terms of free world-wide publicity.

Pacquiao, not the Philippine team, got the mileage during the NBC Network's tape-delayed broadcast from China's Saccoued Stadium, nicknamed the "Bird's Nest," and epicenter of Beijing's colorful Big Party host Friday.

NBC cameras zoomed in on the squint as he carried the Filipino flag ahead of his cropped, bowing-tied contemporaries—while NBC broadcast star Bob Costas offered his equally famous partner Matt Lauer tidbits about the reigning IBF/Lineal/Ring champ.

Costas described Pacquiao as one of the best boxers in the world and the people's hero in the Philippines. Continuing his spiel, Costas explained that Manny was our an Olympic participant, but was tapped to bear the Philippine flag "because of his success in that country."

NBC anchor did not ask President Macapagal-Arroyo as our contingent marched past the dignitaries on its way to the center of the "Bird's Nest" during the march of nations.

Among only a handful of heads of state shown acknowledging their respective delegations included US President George W. Bush and his wife Laura, French President Nicolas Sarkozy, Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, Australian Premier Kevin Rudd, who spoke Barack Obama and Afghan President Hamid Karzai.

By the way Pacquiao was not the only professional boxer who served as a team participating standard bearer during the Games' opening. Taiwanese world boxing champion Alexis Arguello carried the flag of Nicaragua and was the subject of a longer "broadcast caption" than Pacquiao.

Costas and Lauer said the "explosive this man", now a Olympian sports functionary is the current vice mayor of Managua, the Nicaragua's main city and a running for mayor in the upcoming election this November.

* * *

Although broadcast several hours after it actually happened in Beijing, the opening bits of the 29th Olympiad of the modern era scored big in television ratings.

The colorful spectacle, China's introduction to the world, seven-aged 14.2 million viewers, emerging as the biggest draws on the American boob tube since the Super Bowl seen by the underdog New York Giants over the heavily favored New England Patriots.

According to Nielsen Media Research, Beijing's big Party eclipsed this year's Academy Awards and the final of "American Idol" in terms of household viewers. It is also the most watched opening ceremony ever held in the United States.

The 2004 Athens Games averaged 23.4 million viewers for its first night, while the Sydney Olympics four years earlier notched 27.3 million viewers.

Beijing, is 15 hours ahead of America's West Coast and 12 hours of the Eastern seaboard, that viewers from California to New York woke up Friday (Saturday in Asia) playing dumb that the Olympics had not begun.

Not only that. Television audiences from one to eleven are united with NBC televised the start of the Games to US prime time from 7 p.m. to midnight last Friday (Saturday Beijing time).

NBC's TV coverage happens for behind actual events in Beijing, so results from the Games will be shown on tape delay on the North American continent and the rest of the West.

The results would be denied of drama, but NBC, nonetheless, is expected to be the most watched network in the next 15 days.

SPORTSWATCH

DWYANE WADE of the USA rushes in a game against China Sunday night. The Americans won, 101-70. Story on Page A26.

Lezak rescues teammate's Olympic dream

THE KISS FINALLY: swim Michael Phelps (right) joins Garrett-Weber-Gale in an emotional celebration after Jason Lezak rescued the United States 4x100 freestyle squad with his fingertip.

BEIJING—JASON LEZAK EFFY MICHAEL Phelps no swam for eight Olympic gold medals by a fingertip Monday when he anchored the United States to the 4x100 meter relay title in record time.

Lezak, the oldest man on the US swimming team at 32, was nearly a body length behind the massive titan Bernard of France as they made the final turn, but the American dragged the lane rope, drubbing off the Frenchman and seemingly overtaking him on the very last stroke.

Watching on deck, Phelps threw both arms toward the roof of the Water Cube, his quest to break Mark Spitz's record of seven gold medals having survived what will likely be its toughest test.

The Americans shattered the world record their "B" team set the previous day in the preliminaries, finishing in 3 minutes, 8.24 seconds—nearly 1 seconds below the 15-hour-old mark of 3:12.23.

"Unbelievable," said Phelps, who swam the fastest leg. Jason finished that race better than we could even ask for. I was fired up. Going into that last 50, I saw Bar. Pac this is going to be a close race. Jason's last 50 or 15 meters were incredible."

The French were second in 3:08.32—eight-one-hundredths of a second behind. Australia took the bronze in 3:09.01.

"I've been on the last two relays where we came up short," Lezak said. "To be honest with you I got really tired of losing. I finished and swung."

Two other world records fell Monday with Kosuke Kitajima of Japan winning the 100 breaststroke in 58.91 seconds and Rirsty Coventry setting her 200 backstroke semifinal best in 58.77.

Kitajima pounded the water defiantly and let out a scream after breaking Brendan Hansen's 2-year-old record of 59.13. Akiyoshi Ueda of Japan made the silver medal and Hagaan Dahmoog of Kuwait took bronze.

Coventry bettered Natalie Coughlin's mark of 58.97 set on the US trials last month.

She'll go "head to head in Sunday's final. Coughlin now has been in 59.03 with a new, considerable swim.

"I just got to get home and take care of myself. It's getting to be a tight final," Coventry said. "Natalie's just so good at racing and [planning out her races, so I just expect nothing less but fast swimming tomorrow morning."

Libby Trickett of Australia just missed another world record in the women's 100 butterfly winning gold with a time of 56.79. Christine Magnussen of Canada and Hanna Hemmed the silver (57.10) and another Aussie, Jess Schipper, took the bronze (57.26).

Rebecca Adlington of Britain rallied in the final turning to overhand Kaitel Hoff of the United States and take the gold in the 400 freestyle in 4:03.22.

Hoff was second in 4:03.39. Joanne Jackson of Britain won the bronze in 4:03.53.

TRICKETT

RETIRED Kitajima of Japan celebrates after winning an Olympic gold and setting a new world record.

Gymnasts, Phelps take center stage

BEIJING—JUST ABOUT ALL THAT'S left for the Chinese men's artistic gymnastics team to do is ride on Olympic gold medal on home soil.

Winners of three straight world titles and seven of the last eight, 14 individual world titles and an Olympic gold, China is expected to add to its burgeoning gold medal tally at the Beijing Games on Tuesday when the men's team final is held.

It's one of 19 medals to be awarded Tuesday the fourth full day of competition. A total of 302 gold medals will be handed out before the games end on Aug. 24.

"The whole team is united and very confident," Li Xiaopeng said after Saturday's qualifying session at the National Indoor Stadium, where the host team led Japan by more than five points—379.675 to 369.500.

Although Phelps is hoping for the same thing, and don't bet against a guy who could very well win eight golds by the time the Olympics end. That would break Mark Spitz's record of seven from the 1972 Olympics.

He already has two, one in the 400-meter individual medley and another for being part of the American 4x100 freestyle relay team.

Phelps nearly lost his chance to go for eight when the Americans trailed in the relay Monday by nearly a body length with 50 meters to go. But Jason Lezak pulled off one of the greatest comebacks in Olympic history, hanging to the wall just ahead of France's Alain Bernard. Our relayed sixty can Page A17.

LEZAK

Phelps will go for gold No. 3 in Tuesday's 200 freestyle. The American qualified fourth-fastest in Monday's semifinals, losing his lane to teammate Peter Vanderkaay, whose time of 1 minute, 45.76 seconds ranks him the leading qualifier for the final.

Park Tae-Hwan of South Korea, who already has a gold medal in the 400 freestyle, was second fastest. Phelps finished third in the 200 less four years ago in Athens, losing to Ian Thorpe and Pieter van den Hoogenband to what was billed as the "Race of the Century."

Indian leaves Chinese top gun sobbing

SINDHU

BEIJING—SHUTTER 23rd Olympics wept on the podium as he collected his silver medal on Monday and sobbed uncontrollably at a news conference, showing the huge pressure on Chinese athletes to win on home soil at the Beijing Olympics.

The hot favorite to defend his title in the 10m air rifle, Zhu had stumbled late in the qualification when he had to rush his final shots.

He was still within striking range of gold until the second last in Abhinav Bindra—himself facing the prospect of winning India's first ever individual Olympic gold—who normed ninth from fourth place.

"After 2004 my only target was to defend my title in Beijing," Zhu said as his voice quivered. He bowed his head down, wiped away his tears and paused for a moment.

"Getting a silver medal is already a very good consolation for me because I really worked hard for it," who admitted he felt enormous pressure to win another gold medal to add to China's medal tally.

Zhu, 23, got off to a good start with a perfect 10 on his 40 shots in qualification for a 600. But then he had to rush his final 20 shots under the 90-minute time limit and ended up with only 507 of a possible 600.

Reuters

Can Team USA fight on without a special star?

BEIJING—US PRESIDENT GEORGE W. Bush, who cheered from the sidelines here Sunday, did not notice it but there was eye problem with the USA Olympic basketball team.

It didn't happen in be a team, it was an invasion surely.

A bigger problem was that it had no singular star like, say, Yao Ming for China or Manu Ginobili for defending Olympic basketball champion Argentina.

That clear picture came out after the American team made a devastating debut here, a follow-up act to the thunderous afternoon downpour Sunday.

Reports that inside tag which says the US basketball squad here is something but a colorful collection of superstars.

* * *

That story label was perfect for the 2004 USA basketball team to the Athens Olympics whose members, led by Allen Iverson, tried to outride one another in a selfish bid to be the MVP of the Olympic series.

Tuesday night here, Kobe Bryant, Lebron James, Dwight Howard, Dwyne Williams, Chris Paul, the biggest young and not-too-young names in the NBA, were all present and played their respective roles in the game against China.

Chinese citizens numbering over 20,000 and hoping Yao Ming and the Chinese squad would trip the US squad filled the coliseum early.

* * *

But those Chinese fans headed home dazed, mystified.

They also started asking themselves who among the American pros did the most damage to their national squad.

There was no easily answer.

For one, the American squad that humbled Chinese fancy did not leave the lane.

There was hardly a trace of cocaine-phoebes.

The Americans never found the lane.

There were no hoped moves in the end.

* * *

OK, two or three more Yao things would have made it better for the Chinese side.

But this went only because the hyperbole Houston Rockets giant shone and threatened to do it on his own in the first quarter.

He handed big rebounds, scored inside and converted on a couple of graceful perimeter flips.

That individual bravura no doubt further fired up Chinese dreams of an upset.

* * *

The USA team, on the other hand, made sure there would be no such thing as a dirty humiliating reversal.

And all the members of the star-studded American team had to do was play stiffless basketball.

OK, Kobe Bryant was there but he was basically absent in the dunk of competition.

The Bryant that played against China Sunday was a shining example of a dedicated team man, an swaggery no more; only pure concern for solid team philosophy.

If Lebron James as much as scored up high en route to a thundering dunk, this was the enthusiasm of team effort.

King James would succeed as his assist expenditure, but only after being prepped and goaded by a more assist flip from backcourt.

* * *

It was, if there's such a thing to basketball, painless surgery.

There were points in the third quarter when it would appear that the Chinese were not being humbled, but were, in fact, still determining.

The Great Wall team's determined incapability, eased by a ball of uncharacteristic carelessness.

Yes, the China team may have been crushed, but it's safe to say Yao Ming & Co. never feel fear.

They kept their self-respect at the end of the relentless massacre.

* * *

Unlike a shattered priorfighter, the China team, besides bad, did not have to be repaired and stitched back into shape.

Of course, the Chinese must be told that, in their case, it was not the selfish NBA brand of offensive that did them in.

Last Tuesday, the US basketball team marched as a unit riding on a selfless West Point-style of defense.

Hold it. Unfortunately, President Bush may have to order a forced Iraq-style invasion when the USA teams goes up against either Argentina or Lithuania, which practically had to use the bludgeons before Ginobili et al. reluctantly yielded in the other half of Sunday's major preliminaries.

After that win over China, there's very little chance the American could indulge in another Chinese Iraqui hardcourt feast.

BARE EYE

Rivaah Trinidad

BADMINTON SHOCKER

Japanese boot out defending champs

BEIJING—JAPAN'S MIYUKI MAEDA and Satoko Suetsuna upset defending Olympic champions Ying Wei and Huang Sui-wen of China on Monday to advance to the women's doubles semifinals in Olympic badminton.

Maeda and Suetsuna, who are unseeded, took advantage of unforced errors by the top-seeded Chinese duo en route to set 8-21, 21-15, 21-14 win at Beijing University of Technology Gymnasium.

After they won, both Maeda and Suetsuna bowed deeply in the center of the court.

"This is the biggest win of our lives," Suetsuna said. "They are the Olympic champions so even when we had much poise we couldn't take anything for granted."

It was the first major setback of the tournament for the Chinese nation which is looking to dominate on home soil after winning three of five gold medals in Athens.

"We couldn't focus in the third set," said Ying. "We just made too many unforced errors."

Japan's Kumiko Ogura and Reiko Shiota, scheduled to play later Monday, are sixth in the world rankings and hugely popular in Japan. Both had expected such a strong showing from Maeda and Suetsuna, who are eighth in the rankings.

Earlier, Malaysia's Lee Chong Wei defeated Singapore's Ronald Susilo in the second round of men's singles, 21-13, 21-14.

AP

REVERSE Maeda and Satoko Suetsuna (left) celebrate after their upset triumph.

Beijing 2008 SPORTS

Yao shines even as US team routs host China

BEIJING—A LOPING RUN TO the arc, a split-second pause and the flap of the net. It wasn't exactly a breakthrough moment, but it will be remembered as the most famous three-pointer scored in China.

As expected, Yao Ming was the center of attention at Sunday's China-U.S. Olympic basketball matchup and his exhilarating banker to open the scoring has already become the stuff of legend.

"I was just really happy to make that shot," Yao said after the final whistle, clearly drained by the lightening pace of the US squad. "It was the first score in our Olympic campaign here at home and I'll always remember it. It impresses that we can keep our heads up in the face of really tough odds."

Ultimately Yao and the rest of China were drawn, 116-70, as the team of NBA superstars, but not without winning praise for his gritty play and enthusiastic support for his teammates. Whether chasing a ball into the photographers, breaking a Yao-intimidating scoring drought, or just jumping off the bench to celebrate a teammate's basket even after all was already lost, Yao was the visual, vitamin and emotional heart of China's squad.

"Yao played a great game," said Toronto Raptors forward Chris Bosh. "He did a great job defensively at the beginning of the game."

The China-US game was always going to be one of the most anticipated showdowns in Game Olympics and the Beijing Olympic Basketball Gymnasium was filled to its 10,000-seat capacity—and then well beyond. China had nearly an hour that it faced its opponents on the floor, with familiar challenges likely to be less of a strain, at least psychologically.

For Yao Ming, it was really a historical match, as it's really very significant for all of us," said Chinese forward Yao Ningze.

The 2.26-meter (7-foot-4-inch) Houston Rockets center was expected to be one of the draws of the Beijing Games, and his season-ending knee injury in February left Chinese collectively holding their breath.

"We're just so happy to see him play," said student Wang Haobin. "It would have been different without him, not as special."

Yao tried to hold things together as China grew increasingly frustrated under the relentless US pressure, but the last part of the game was obviously taking its toll. With 4:45 left in the final quarter, coach Jonas Gustavsson called him back to the bench and Yao walked off, a raised fist to acknowledge the roaring crowd.

The US all-star cast put on a dazzling show of scoring slams and tomahawk dunks Sunday, drawing rousing ovations in one of the most anticipated events of the Beijing Games.

US President George W. Bush cheered from the stands as NBA stars LeBron James, Dwyane Wade and Kobe Bryant scored "solo" and "alley" from the mid-Bay scoring corner at Beijing's basketball series.

Wade scored 35 points, James had 18 and Bryant finished with 11 points for the Americans in a match that USA Basketball officials were told could draw the largest viewing audiences ever for a sporting event. AP

TAO PHEW (right) zips the ball to against Chris Bosh during the US-China match Sunday night. AFP

OLYMPICS MEDAL CHEW
MILO
The Official Energy Drink of the Philippine Team to the 2008 Beijing Olympics

Rank	Country	G	S	B	T
1	China	6	3	2	11
2	South Korea	4	1	1	7
3	United States	3	4	12	12
4	Italy	2	2	1	5
5	Australia	2	1	1	4
6	Japan	2	1	1	4
7	Poland	2	1	1	4
8	Czech Republic	2	1	1	4
9	Netherlands	1	1	1	3
10	Finland	1	1	1	3
11	Spain	1	1	1	3
12	Germany	1	1	1	3
13	Hungary	1	1	1	3
14	India	1	1	1	3
15	Romania	1	1	1	3
16	Thailand	1	1	1	3
17	Russia	1	1	2	4
18	France	1	1	2	4
19	North Korea	1	1	3	5
20	Cuba	1	1	3	5
21	Slovenia	1	1	3	5

Rank	Country	G	S	B	T
22	Brazil	1	1	2	4
23	Austria	1	1	1	3
24	Hungary	1	1	1	3
25	Norway	1	1	1	3
26	Slovakia	1	1	1	3
27	Sweden	1	1	1	3
28	Turkey	1	1	1	3
29	Vietnam	1	1	1	3
30	Zimbabwe	1	1	1	3
31	Algeria	1	1	0	2
32	Azerbaijan	1	1	0	2
33	Belarus	1	1	0	2
34	Croatia	1	1	0	2
35	Georgia	1	1	0	2
36	Indonesia	1	1	0	2
37	Switzerland	1	1	0	2
38	Tunisia	1	1	0	2
39	Uzbekistan	1	1	0	2

RP schedule

Weightlifting—A11

Lifter (A)	Weight Lifting
TOMORROW	**WEDNESDAY**
(National Museum Center)	(Beijing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics)
JAMES WILSON—Final placing, 20th in field of 31, men's 200-meter butterfly (1:58.39)	WESLEY DIAZ—Final placing, 11th place, men's 69-kg. class and joint 10th kg. total (307 kg, women's 48 kg class

Gay awestruck after chat with Kobe

BEIJING—HE IS A WORLD CHAMPION sprinter and among the fastest in stolen gold at the Beijing Olympics, yet Tyson Gay was awestruck during a brief chat with American basketball player Kobe Bryant.

"I was very surprised. We were in the gym I asked him if I could I take a picture with him," Gay told reporters Monday. "He said 'Here's your leg, you are in my house. I hope everything's coming on.'

"I texted my mother and told her," Gay revealed. "She was shocked."

Bryant, a Los Angeles Lakers guard and the NBA's most valuable player, is the leader of the crack US Olympic basketball team favored to win gold in Beijing.

The US beat China, 101-70, on Sunday in one of the most highly anticipated events of the Olympics. Even the pro-China crowd cheered wildly for Bryant.

"It meant something to me," Gay, who will engage in a sprinting showdown with Jamaican Usain Bolt and Asafa Powell, said. "He's a huge superstar, they love him over here."

Gay, who beat his hamstring during the US national championships but revealed a force in the 100 meters, even hung around Bryant when the US athletes circled the stadium during Friday's opening ceremony.

"The crowd was chanting 'Kobe, Kobe' and I wanted to get next to him so I would be on TV," he said. Reuters

World leaders watch US-China cage match

By Ted S. Melendres

BEIJING—AT LEAST EIGHT HEADS OF STATE AND MONARCHS including President Macapagal-Arroyo and US President George W. Bush, braved their departure from Beijing to watch Sunday night's USA-China basketball group match at the Beijing Olympic Stadium, according to the local newspapers here.

Ms Arroyo and Bush were part of at least 80 world leaders who were invited by China President Hu Jintao to watch the Beijing Olympics' spectacular opening ceremonies at the Bird's Nest national stadium Friday last week. Both Chief Executives went to the basketball game with their spouses.

* * *

Philippine Olympic Committee president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco joined Team Philippines chief of mission Rep. Monico Puentevella at the weightlifting competition Monday and was impressed to see 17-year-old lifter Hidilyn Diaz break two national records in the 58 kg category.

"Matalangkas ka (What a strong-willed child)," gushed Cojuangco. "Akala ko pag kinatulukasan or hindian sa sport siya (Maybe he's a good failure in the sport)."

* * *

The number of journalists covering the Beijing Olympics reached a record high of 25,670 on the fourth day of competition Monday, almost double the number of athletes vying active here, according to officials of the Beijing Olympic Games Organizing Committee (Bogoc).

East Timor, which sent three athletes to the Games, has five reporters here, a staffer at the Media Press Center here said.

* * *

Thailand, Southeast Asia's sporting power, has already won a gold medal courtesy of lightlifter Praphawadee Jaroensathitsakun in the women's 53 kg. It was Thailand's fourth gold medal so far in three Olympics. The Thais added two more bronzes to its collection in Monday's weightlifting competitions.

Indonesia raised a bronze in the men's event of the 53 kg class.

SAVE YOUR HAIR
YOUR PROBLEM:
Rreceding hairline

SVENSON'S HAIRLOSS Rx:
Hair Advance Stimulator Therapy
Your grandfather and father started becoming bald that way. Now it's your turn to have a receding hairline. If you dread the prospect of meeting the same bald fate stop losing hair right now at Svenson Hair Advance Stimulator Therapy will restore your hairline's natural level by stimulating hairless and hardening ringworm for a thicker look.
You don't have to suffer from hairloss. Take the effective Svenson solution for your receding hairline and look forward to a thicker fuller look. Call Svenson for a FREE hair and scalp check-up.
Svenson
CALL 892-HAIR (4247)

SUMBLE TUMBLE Japan's Yosuke Kanamaru (bottom) tackles Mongolia's Dashdavaa Ganzorug in the men's +72 kg judo class. Kanamaru defeated Ganzorug in advance. AFP

Cash reward unclear for wushu bets

By Ted S. Melendres

BEIJING...PRESUMPTUOUS WORD DARLIN' or simply plain misunderstanding.

President Macapagal-Arroyo is said to have promised to give P10 million to any member of the Philippine wushu team who will win gold in the sport's upcoming competition at the Beijing Olympics.

Sinduwal wushu president Julian Cosmo also said Ms Arroyo made the pledge Sunday night when she visited with the athletes at the Olympic Village here.

Wushu is not an Olympic sport and is competition is to be held here in conjunction with the 2008 Summer Games is not under the auspices of the International Olympic Committee.

According to the IOC charter, an Olympic "special event," like Beijing's wushu meet, ranks below the category "demonstration sport," meaning wushu has a long way to go before it gains recognition as a regular sport in the Summer Games.

Taekwondo was a demonstration sport in the 1988 Seoul Olympics before it debuted as a regular discipline at the 1992 Barcelona Games.

Cosmo also said he asked the President whether the 69 wushu athletes, who will vie in seven matches, from 23 to 65 kg, will find to receive the P15 million reward to be given to the country's first Olympic gold medalist.

The answer was put up by the government and a host of generous private sponsors.

"Mas nagagalingan ba sa kanila? (Are they good?)" Ms Arroyo supposedly asked. "Kung makakuha (If they can win) gold, who sees?"

There's one problem, though. The private sponsors have not been consulted about the President's idea.

The government's share in the reward pot is P4.5 million, under the Sports Incentives Act.

Asked about Cosmo's claim, delegation chief of mission and Sandiel Rep. Monico Puentevella said he didn't hear the President make the pledge.

World championship gold medalist Willy Wang heads the wushu squad and will compete in the taolu event. The other members are modern artists Shajie Rivera, Mary Jane Espina and Marian Macasco.

At the 1988 Seoul Olympics, couple bowler Arianne Cerdeña won the singles gold medal and received the P1 million reward put up by a private sponsor for the country's first Olympic champion.

Bowling, though, was also a demonstration sport during the Games.

IN THIS ISSUE
- HSBC forecasts another hike in key rates of BSP/B4
- Gov't debt rose by 1.4% to P3.93B in May /B6

Website: www.inquirer.net/business
Editor: Raul D. Pangalangan • Associate Editor: Carrie S. Nuñeza
Express your feedback: Inquirer Business Forum page by SMS (Globe or Smart) • E-mail: business@inquirer.com.ph

DELL Precision M4500 Mobile Workstation
INTEGRATED COMPUTER SYSTEMS, INC.

IMF prods gov't on single 'sin tax' rate

As much as ₱33.8B in add'l revenues seen

By Michelle V. Remo

THE INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND IS PUSHING PROPOSALS for the government to adopt a single rate of cigarette tax, saying such a move would yield anywhere between P31.8 billion and P33.8 billion in additional revenues in the first year of implementation.

The IMF presented its calculations in a study requested by the Department of Finance, which is seeking an amendment to the 8th Tax Law of 2005 that implements a complicated four-tier tax system.

The revenue gain cut issued by the IMF was based on the assumption that the uniform rate of excise tax would be set at P14 a pack, as what was proposed under House Bill 3710 authored by Rep. Danilo Suarez.

The IMF's estimated revenue gain was a little less than the P94.3 billion forecast of Source. The IMF said it took into account price elasticity of demand in computing the revenue gain.

Price elasticity of demand measures the change in volume of consumption of a good when its price increases or decreases.

The IMF study showed that the price elasticity of demand for cigarettes was relatively low: for every 100-percent increase in cigarette price, volume of demand goes down by only 0.6 to 1.1 percent.

Since demand for cigarettes is nearly price inelastic, an increase in the average excise tax rate, which will push prices up, is MP/RGOS/ BI

Stocks rise on easing oil prices

Still no oil from Galoc field off Palawan

By Brigid L. Ho

FIRST OIL FROM THE GALOC FIELD IN offshore northwest Palawan is still not reported to flow to the next two weeks as restoration of required equipment will not be completed earlier than Aug. 31.

In a disclosure to the Australian Stock Exchange, Joanne Williams, deputy managing director of Nido Petroleum Ltd., said "adverse conditions" in the South China Sea the past week had stalled field operations at the site. Nido Petroleum has a 10.26 percent stake in the Galoc project.

"The operator (Galoc Production Co. or GPC) has advised that replacement work will commence in earnest after the arrival at site of a specialist support vessel, expected around Aug. 19. Once started, it is estimated it will take six to seven days to complete the riser replacement...and prepare for first oil production," she added.

The floating production storage and offloading (FPSO) facility was disconnected from the mooring and riser system to ensure the safety of the personnel on the vessel and to protect the production system from damage when Typhoon "Frank" hit the Philippines.

GPC said the ongoing inspection, reinstatement and recommission activities involved "several delicate, interrelated operations." The results of these activities would determine when first oil would be drawn from the field.

Independent appraiser GaffneyCline and Associates has estimated the production rate at the Galoc field to reach as high as 23,000 barrels a day on average, for the first year of production.

GPC owns 33.29 percent of SC 14C while Otto Energy Ltd. holds 16.26 percent.

TOYOTA moving forward

AGI, Star Cruises investing $1.55B in tourism projects

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

ALLIANCE GLOBAL GROUP INC. (AGI) and Star Cruises Ltd., the third biggest cruise line operator in the world, will invest $1.55 billion in two tourism-related projects on a 27-hectare portion of the famed "Pagcor City" along Manila Bay and in a township project of AGI's sister firm Megaworld Corp. in Pasay City.

AGI, led by property tycoon Andrew Tan, said the vehicle company for the two large-scale tourism projects would be Travellers International Hotel Group Inc., AGI's subsidiary, which will pour in P69 billion over the next five years into the projects.

This will make it the biggest hotel owner in the country with a total of 5,000 rooms. Travellers International also invests P400 million to build three hotels as well as a themed shopping and entertainment center in Newport City, Megaworld's 25-hectare master-planned urban resort complex across from the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) Terminal 3.

Once completed, the Newport City hotel project will have a total of about 1,600 rooms. The six-star, all-suite Maxims Hotel will account for 176 rooms; the five-star Marriott Hotel, 300 rooms; and a three-star hotel with 1,260 rooms. Marriott is expected to open in 2009 while Maxims and the three-star hotel will start operations by 2010.

Maxims' 176 hotel rooms will include three villas each with a private swimming pool and 24 suites equipped with a private outdoor jacuzzi and garden.

Travellers International was granted a license to develop the two tourism-related urban projects by Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. (Pag-

ADS, TTHP B3

Biggest hotel owner in RP

Chaos theory

Bert Nabian

CHURCH BELLS RANG OUT ALL over Ortigas following the news that Metro Pacific had bought the toll road, worth of Manila, for $250 million from PPH, which has large debts. PPH's board nearly told its parent company SMC and the company told Mr. Lopez. He was delighted and told the Church and the bell-ringer rolled the bell.

I was flirting at the Olympics and in the 100-meter breaststroke, one girl finished about 5 minutes behind the rest. The umpire had to explain to her that despite its description, the race allowed to use her arms.

In the hammer-throwing competition, one contestant chewed large chunks of wood from the handle to make it lighter as it would fly further. He was caught and the contestant said, "We do not expect this kind of behavior from a professional, maybe from an "amateur thrower."

The long jump and the high jump were won by an Australian who shattered both world's records by a stupendous margin. On examination, it was found to be a kangaroo. The Aussies argued that it was a native of Australia and had a valid passport. Tried by a kangaroo court was rejected and the matter will now go to The Hague.

After 2 years, I managed to get Hayable Platinum. I came home one afternoon and found my wife playing with her Digibox. She asked me, "What do you have up there, my pretty face or my sexy body?" I replied, "Your sense of humor."

* * *

I HAVE been a technical analyst since 1970 and have consistently read the charts well, as documented by my recommendations going back as far as 2001. If you had sold at the top, I had two 12 baggers (ITE and Petnet), three 5-baggers and the rest up 2 or 3 times, a record I am proud of.

But lately, I have become humbled by the wild and totally unpredictable gyrations of Wall Street, up 280-300 points one day and down 290-300 points the next. The chart of the Dow is similar to alternating current, which reverses at 50 cycles a second, not as fast but with a similar pattern.

The oil price craze $4 and Wall Street takes off. Next day there seems to be terrible losses, with write-offs up from $350 billion to $482 billion and rising. More job losses, lower consumer confidence and a looming global recession: leaves all investors depressed as the market collapses.

The following day, oil drops nearly $5 to $113.20 a barrel and the market takes off again. This goes either to making it impossible to understand anything into the charts and for the time being, I am inclined to believe in chaos theory.

We have seen a big recovery, not only in the US but also in almost every country. Even if oil goes down and stays down, which I doubt, the effect on inflation will certainly be beneficial but it will not reverse the decline to house prices and the foreclosures and write-offs still continue.

Greenspan said last week: "House prices are nowhere near the bottom." He rarely comes out with such a pronouncement and I feel he is right.

Until the price of houses stabilizes, banks and security firms will continue to lose money; we're still further losses and possibly ask for new money to sustain their capital adequacy ratio. In such a scenario, I think that the original estimate of UBS that write-offs would total $600 billion is too low.

The Fed recently rescued two banks and has another 123 on their watch list. Bodies and the Treasury have unfathomable funds with which to bail out everyone and what happens after the Fed closes its window on Jan. 17 Fannie Mae announced a loss of $1.3 billion, after making provisions for losses of $1.4 billion in the quarter and cut its dividend. Freddie Mac did even worse with a quarterly loss three times bigger than expected and an 80-percent cut in its dividend.

The Treasury may be forced to buy $30 billion of preferred shares to prevent their insolvency. Mr. Market told thousands of clients that they won't be allowed to draw money on their home-equity credit lines.

Investor AIG posted a stupendous expected loss of $5.36 billion due to massive writedowns related to the credit collapse. Citigroup agreed to buy back $7 billion of auction-rate securities after the New York attorney general said the company misled investors.

In May, individual income jumped 1.8 percent due to the $78 billion worth of stimulus package checks sent out. But in June, the figure had dropped to 0.1 percent and inclement will probably turn negative.

On the labor front, employers announced that they planned 26 percent more job cuts in July as the job losses will continue at least to the end of 2008. Homebuilders are facing record foreclosures and there are 3.8 million unsold homes, the most since 1982. "It is going to take several years to get rid of all this inventory and homebuilders have no choice but to sell at discounted prices."

UBS notes, "The world economy is precariously close to a recession in 2009 and cut GDP from 2.1 percent to 2.9 percent. A growth rate of 2.5 percent is considered consistent with a recession. A global recession would be the first since 2001/2 and might ease inflation, projected by the IMF to be the fastest in 9 years."

Julian Baty, a Swiss bank trading internationally predicted, "The world is underestimating the extent of a synchronized economic downturn. Global trading is happen. 2009 will be worse than 2008."

The global downdown has already affected the profits of HSBC, which has large interests in the US. Mitsubishi Financial is another casualty and the Japanese economy is teetering on the verge of a recession as the yen rises. Japan has a demographic problem with a rapidly aging population and declining birthrate. Japan's GDP growth has been sluggish for the past 15 years and the government has been unable to stimulate spending. Europe is now feeling the heat, particularly the UK where there is no Panama Mac to rescue people from foreclosures.

The growth rate in China has slowed steadily from 11.4 percent last year to 10.1 percent last quarter. Even with the appearance of the renminbi, it looks set for a soft landing with sustainable growth at 9 percent to 9 percent.

Commodities have been badly hit with gold down from $1,000 to $858 and other hard and soft commodities are following the downtrend. Oil is the most important commodity and wherever it goes, the others will follow. Speculators are moving out of oil and back into stocks but the oil price is highly unpredictable and therefore, so is the stock market.

The PSEi has completely ignored Wall Street, using steadily and ignoring inflation at 12.2 percent, a figure higher than anyone expected. Nevertheless, foreign brokers continue to sell one month every day.

IMF prods gov't . . .

From page B1

are expected to substantially reduce consumption. Increasing the tax would therefore lead to higher revenue for the government, the IMF said.

According to economists by Soares, an excise tax of P5.64 a pack should be the sweet spot for excise tax or cigarettes if the government simply wanted to keep the same amount of excise collection under the existing four-tax regime.

Imposing a uniform excise tax of P19 a pack would therefore help the government earn incremental revenue.

Current excise tax rates on cigarettes under the Sin Tax Law of 2005 ranges from P5.23 to P26.06 a pack.

The IMF also took into account the ill-effects of the front-loading of cigarette production in computing the estimated revenue gain from imposing a uniform excise tax rate of P5.9 a pack.

Front-loading happens when a cigarette manufacturer produces more than the usual volume of cigarettes during the months prior to the implementation of a higher excise tax rate to initially escape payment of higher taxes.

AGI, Star Cruises ...

From page B2

ord last June 3.

AGI has also dedicated to the Philippine Stock Exchange the acquisition by Star Cruises of 50 percent shares and indirect interest amounting to $100 million in Travelers International.

"The next few years will be exciting for the Philippine tourism industry and we want to play a major role in promoting and developing this industry," AGI president Kingson Sian said.

"We believe in the virtues of making the Philippines one of the best tourist destination in Asia, and together with our partner Star Cruises, we will make this happen," he said.

Sian added that the recent opening of the Sun 3 would pave the way for the emergence of Sanques City as a tourism gateway for the country.

In support of Travelers International's efforts to promote tourism, the Philippine Economic Zone Authority has granted Newport City one of the country's first tourism economic zones.

The Manila Stopover project, meanwhile, will serve as a tourists' gateway to the country via the world-renowned Manila Bay.

Protect Yourself From Suspected "COUNTERFEIT MONEY"

- 5-in-1 COUNTERFEIT MONEY DETECTOR
- BILL COUNTER WITH ULTRA VIOLET DETECTOR

"A Banking Equipment and Technology Services Company"

transcripro

OWN A HOMEBASED INTERNATIONAL DOLLAR EARNING BUSINESS!

Ikaaapekto sa BAHAY pag retirees, housewives, out-of-school youths, ex-OFWs

1. HOMEBASED TRANSCRIPTION OFFICE!
2. HOMEBASED International Call Station!

WE PROVIDE EVERYTHING: Work content, hardware, software, training, etc.

For details, visit www.transcripro.net

LIMITED SLOTS AVAILABLE!

For appointment, call: (02) 701-3444 to 3445, Text: 0917/5049132

TEAM PHILIPPINES! PINOY GAWA NATIN ITO!

From the Ivatans of Batanes to the Tawi-tawians of Tawi-Tawi

Unites the Filipino

JRS EXPRESS

Serving the Filipino since 1960

www.jrs-express.com

QnE Quick & Easy

Accounting & Inventory Software For Medium Sized Companies

Used by more than 3000 companies...

CALL FOR FREE DEMO

MEDIUM BUSINESS SOLUTION

MUSTASP Seed

PSBank Peso TIME DEPOSIT

Deposit Amount	Interest Rates*			
In Pesos	30 Days	60 Days	180 Days	1 year
100,000 - 499,999	3.750	3.750	3.875	4.250
500,000 - 999,999	4.000	4.000	4.125	4.500
1.0MM - 4.99MM	4.750	4.750	4.875	5.250
5.0MM and up	5.000	5.000	5.125	5.500

Manage your accounts online via PSBank Remote Banking. Open a time deposit now at any of 144 branches nationwide.

ALTERNATIVE THINKING ABOUT BUSINESS AND TECHNOLOGY

Simplicity and reliability now in a box. A very affordable box.

intel Xeon Powerful. Efficient.

When business is growing fast, the last thing you need to worry about is your I.T. Thankfully you have the HP ProLiant ML130 G5 Server powered by the Quad-Core Intel® Xeon® Processor to count on. Its easy-access chassis and internal component labels make expansion fast and simple. And the best part is that this expandable performance comes at a low cost. Finally, a solution that is not just easy to run, but also easy to own.

Technology for better business outcomes.

HP PROLIANT DL180 G5 SERVER PHP 85,000

HP PROLIANT DL120 G5 SERVER PHP 58,500

HP PROLIANT DL160 G5 SERVER PHP 71,500

HP PROLIANT ML150 G5 SERVER PHP 92,000

HP PROLIANT DL180 G5 SERVER PHP 123,000

HP PROLIANT DL160 G5 SERVER PHP 92,000

hp

HSBC forecasts another hike in key rates of BSP

Overnight borrowing rate could exceed 6% by end-2008

By Doris C. Dumlao

BRITISH BANKING GIANT HSBC expects the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas to raise its key interest rates by another 25 basis points this year to contain the effect of inflation and firm up the peso versus the US dollar.

In its Aug. 7 commentary by HSBC's global research, the bank said there was even a possibility that the BSP's overnight borrowing rate by yearend would rise beyond the 6-percent to hard earlier projected.

While expecting Philippine inflation to peak in the third quarter of 2008, HSBC said inflation is not on a slowing in consumer price increases, citing the 12.2-percent year-on-year inflation in July, which was the highest in 17 years.

"Second, even after its June-Jul 50 basis-point (interest rate) hike on July 17, the BSP has hardened expectations for additional hikes in the overnight borrowing rate—possibly as soon as the Aug. 28 monetary policy meeting—posing upside risks to our economist's forecast of just one more 25 basis-point hike by yearend," HSBC said.

The BSP raised its interest rates by a total of 75 basis points in June and July.

Although local monetary policy lags by 15 to 21 months before fully affecting the credit channel, it has an immediate impact on inflation expectations, which, in turn, exert a strong influence on consumer prices.

For instance, when people export workers' jobless increases, they may think they are better off spending more money now rather than saving on fears that the value of their cash will be eroded in time.

Traders and consumers, on the other hand, may react to hoard goods while producers may defer expansion plans due to higher cost of borrowing.

"The BSP's willingness to see the overnight borrowing rate (currently at 5.75 percent) as a foreign exchange policy tool—combined with shifting monetary policy parameters on the peso—suggests further rate hikes," HSBC said.

The bank said one source of foreign pressure would be the potential payment ahead of maturity of about $1 billion in loans by the Aboitiz-led National Power Corp. to Japan Bank for International Cooperation before the end of the year.

"Short-term pressure on the peso may also be foreshadowed by the BSP's procurement of an annual $500-million three-month note from the BIS (Bank for International Settlement) to bolster forex reserves," HSBC said.

HSBC's foreign exchange strategists have bet on the peso to trend the year at 49 from the current trading level of 43-44 to the US dollar.

"Moreover, the likelihood of resilient second quarter 2008 growth facilitates the BSP's tightening cycle," the bank said.

It cited a projection from the National Economic and Development Authority that year-on-year domestic economic growth in the second quarter might have retreated to 5.7 percent from 5.2 percent in the first quarter.

But while pressures on bond yields remained high, HSBC said such pressures may ease over the next two to three months due to the following positive functional debt developments:

- The Treasury's cash position is currently awash with cash, following the P70 billion retail treasury bond (RTB) issue last month—over the size of the P55b that matured in late 2008 and may account for up to half of remaining domestic issuance this second semester;
- Debt diversification through an upcoming global bond issuance (which HSBC estimated at $750 million, possibly as early as September 2008) may provide a one-off boost to the peso.
- Fiscal accounts have improved in the first half, given a tax revenue growth of 14-percent year-on-year and delayed spending, which led to a P58 billion budget deficit, underscoring the programmed deficit of P41 billion during the semester.

Among the high-yielding markets in Asia, HSBC said that monetary conditions remained loose in the Philippines and Indonesia, but less so in Vietnam, where the availability of credit was severely constrained.

When inflation sees is on the rise, central banks tend to tighten monetary policy, such as by bringing up its interest rates or the ratio on banks' reserve requirements, in each consumer and business spending that may further fuel inflation.

DA releases ₱12B to 'palay' farmers

By Amy S. Roxas

PREPARING Kinsaman palay in Bantay, Ilo Province. The Department of Agriculture has poured money into the rice sector to boost production.

THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULture has released some P12 billion to palay farmers under the government's "FIELD program" to ensure 90-percent self-sufficiency in the staple by 2010.

Unveiled by President Macapagal-Arroyo last April, the government's P65.7 billion FIELD program stands for fertilizer, infrastructure and irrigation, education, loans and seeds.

With the program, the government expects palay production to hit a record 17.3 million metric tons this year, 16.55 million MT in 2009 and 15.77 million MT in 2010.

As of Aug. 8, the DA said it had released P1.2 billion for fertilizer assistance and subsidies; P5.15 billion for the repair and restoration of irrigation facilities; P684.74 million for extension services; P4.7 billion for farm-to-market roads (FMRs), and has earmarked P2.3 billion for flatbed dryers.

On top of these disbursements, the DA had also fast-tracked the release of P20.85 billion in loans to farmers covered by the program.

Agriculture Secretary Arthur C. Yap earlier said the FIELD program was designed not only to increase palay production but to also guarantee food security for Filipinos amid dwindling rice supplies and spiraling prices of the staple in the world market.

With higher spending for the farm sector, the DA expects palay production for the second half of the year to reach 10.53 million tons out of 2.38 million hectares of land programmed for the wet season planting.

To achieve this, the DA has so far distributed 1.41 million fertilizer discount coupons worth P220 each, to farmers under its joint subsidy program with local government units (LGUs).

Under the FIELD program, the DA has so far finished the restoration of irrigation systems servicing 17,683 ha and the rehabilitation of another 8,991 ha of palay lands.

For 2008, the government targets to repair and rehabilitate irrigation systems covering 342,203 ha and to construct facilities that can serve 20,203 ha nationwide.

Currently, idle irrigation systems nationwide have rendered unproductive some 368,000 ha of dry land, which could have produced at least 20.4 million sacks of rice in two cropping seasons.

Meanwhile, through the DA's Bureau of Postharvest Research and Extension (BPRE), 358 flatbed dryers have so far been set up to outcrop provinces nationwide.

For 2008, the DA plans to put up a total of 1,504 flatbed dryers in palay-producing clusters.

The DA has also begun to seed distribution to farmers for this wet season, consisting of 120,000 bags of hybrid seeds, 1.16 million bags of certified seeds and at least 800,000 bags of good quality seeds.

DOT backs plan to package SE Asia as one destination

By Bernard W. Dominguez

THE DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM IS backing plans to develop Southeast Asia as a single tourism destination, which are expected to benefit areas that may not be interesting enough for visitors when considered alone.

"We support this step aimed at strengthening the goal of making the region into a unified tourism destination," said Tourism Secretary Ace Durano.

The Asean (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) National Tourism Organizations formed its project and budget management committee (PBMC) during a session in Tagaytay City last July in an effort to streamline the allocation of resources available to Asean members for tourism projects.

Durano said that before the committee was formed, Asean member countries were provided with a fund for initiatives related to the travel industry.

The PBMC is composed of the heads of the task forces on marketing (headed by the Philippines), investments, manpower development, standards, cruise tourism, crisis communication and tourism integration.

There is currently a $75,000 tourism fund and the new committee is tasked mainly to review and evaluate proposals sent in by various task forces and other teams under the Asean NTOs.

Also, the PBMC will be responsible for prioritizing projects for funding, recommend work plans and budget, as well as ways to enhance implementation.

Durano (undersecretary Edmundo Aragon Jr. said the move was meant to address the problem of some projects not having enough resources while others having too much.

"The priorities of the fund were undersubscribed," Aragon said.

In an interview in Jakarta last Friday, Asean Secretary General Surin Pitsuwan said the "one Asean destination" initiative was meant to promote countries and tourism sites that may not be interesting enough for visitors unless those were part of a bigger package.

"If you are traveling from so far away like Europe, it no longer makes sense to go to, say, Singapore only," Surin said.

"For example, Bangkok is starting to offer Mandalay (in Myanmar) as a side trip," he said. "And if one gets bored of shopping in Orchard Road (in Singapore), the visitor can go to Hanoi or Cebu, for example."

The Asean secretary general said this was becoming more possible because of declining air fares between Asean cities.

Also, a project of the Asean 5/50 Singapore-led cruise tourism working group promotes port calls to Cebu, Bintan and Subic as part of an Asean cruise package.

Durano said the members of the PBMC would provide added leverage for the country's tourism industry, especially for region-wide investments.

"We have always been an active participant in the Asean's initiatives for the travel trade," he said. "Not only has our presence helped boost goodwill among our neighbors, it also helps[sic] raise the stage of tourism industries around the world."

BACK IN THE BLACK

Union Galvasteel rises from default to leadership

By Dante L. Lucas

Special Inquirer

FOR MANY COMPANIES, A DEfault on bank loans usually means the end of the business, as creditors swoop down to foreclose on collateral or, in extreme cases, engineer a change in ownership.

This danger was very real in the case of rooftop materials maker Union Galvanized Corp. when it missed scheduled payments in a consortium of foreign and local banks just as the East Asian financial crisis broke out a decade ago.

The company—a unit of Steniscorp Consolidated Inc. which, in turn, is owned by industrial investment Philippine Investment Management Inc. (Phinma)—had just finished expanding its production lines by galvanized iron sheets in May 1997.

Less than two months later, the crisis began, halving the value of the peso and pushing the economy into a tailspin.

FEATURE

According to company president Arthur M. Hernando, expanding at that time looked like a good idea since the country was still riding the crest of the building boom that started in the mid-1990s.

"At that time, we were doing very well," he said in an interview. "But we were using antiquated equipment, so we thought we had to be competitive and get in touch with technology."

"We knew we couldn't compete in the 1990s using 1980s technology," he added.

So the firm took out a $10-million loan from a consortium of banks for its expansion, only to see its liabilities more than double to P600 million from only P258 million, almost overnight.

The new GI sheet production lines were completed, but the company could not run it because demand for construction materials came to a virtual standstill.

"The economy went down, interest rates went up, so there was just no business," he said. "Those were the worst years for construction."

Manufacturers suddenly realized—belatedly—that on loans were useful was no longer in vogue with the rapidly changing times.

Apart from the slowing economy, the local market was also beginning to experience the entry of foreign competitors from China and India, both of which could produce and sell galvanized iron sheets more cheaply than local firms.

All of a sudden, GI sheets had become a commodity with very little differentiation between manufacturers and with buyers using little where they bought their supplies from.

"We ran the [production] lines, but then selling the products in the market gave us orgasms for three reasons," Hernando said. "There was a glut, an oversupply and there was low demand."

When the time came for the company to repay its loans, Union Galvanized defaulted on its first and second installments.

Suddenly, the company that was founded in 1963 was in danger of failing.

"Creditors were running after us," Hernando said. "They were nervous. [He found with all due because they were based on the project's schedule. That we'll see the production lines and we'd be able to amortize."

It was little comfort to the firm that many of its peers were experiencing the same problems at the same time.

"Everybody in the industry had the same issue in '98," he said. "They had also expanded."

According to Hernando, some shareholders and directors of the company's parent firm thought most about throwing in the towel, given the changing dynamics—not to mention the poor prospects—of the construction industry at that time.

"At the time of restructuring, some board members were thinking of just ending the business," he said. "At just a P600-million loan, [some said] 'just give it up.'"

Fortunately, the crisis would subside down the number of players in the GI sheet industry from 15 in the 1990s to only eight today.

Union Galvanized was rarer death and in danger of falling by the wayside the way its competitors were.

To be concluded

UNION Galvanized manufacturing plant in Calamba, Laguna

PHINMA and Union Galvanized buckled under the weight of its debts

BUSINESS

Gov't debt rose by 1.4% to ₱3.93T in May

Depreciation of peso vs US dollar blamed

By Michelle F. Baroo

THE GOVERNMENT'S DEBT stock increased by 1.4 percent in May to ₱3.93 trillion from ₱3.87 trillion April, the Bureau of the Treasury said yesterday.

The depreciation of the peso against the dollar during the period boosted the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' (BSP) foreign exchange revaluation gains.

The decline in the value of the local currency added ₱63 billion to the government's dollar-denominated debts.

Data from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas showed that the peso closed at 41.00 against the dollar on the last trading day in May, weaker than the 42.394-to-1 close in April.

The appreciation of other foreign currencies against the US dollar pulled down the value of the debt stock by ₱6 billion.

Some of the government's external obligations were denominated in other currencies, including the yen. The appreciation of those currencies against the dollar allowed the government to allocate less dollars to pay debts denominated in other currencies. In peso terms, the debt stock drops when the currencies appreciate against the US dollar.

The BSP also said the government recorded a net payment of ₱6 billion. Net payment is posted when the amount of debt paid is higher than the fresh loans incurred in a given period.

The pull-down effects on the outstanding debt of the net repayment and the appreciation of their currencies against the US dollar, however, were smaller compared with the impact of the depreciation of the peso against the greenback.

Of the debt stock in May, P1.297 trillion was accounted for by liabilities denominated in peso. The balance of ₱2.629 trillion represents foreign debts.

Domestic debt reached a 9.2-percent decline from ₱1.3 trillion recorded in April. The foreign-currency-denominated debt registered a 3.8-percent increase from the ₱1.57 trillion in the previous month.

Contingent debts—or the amount of liabilities of state-owned firms covered by sovereign guarantees, reached ₱926.9 billion in May, up 2.7 percent from ₱913.5 billion in April. In case of default, the government would have to shoulder these debts.

The government borrows more from domestic sources to minimize exposure to exchange rate volatility.

Local borrowings are done by selling treasury bills and bonds to the domestic capital market. Foreign borrowings are incurred through floatation of sovereign bonds in the international capital market and by tapping official development assistance from multilateral and bilateral lenders.

Oldest procession

BREAKTIME

Comrades R. Bawal III

He was said to have made hundreds and hundreds of millions of pesos.

As I said, it's the oldest stock market trick in the book.

* * *

TO DEFEND the Lola's presence at the signing of a deal among private entities, our lawyer-boys at the Palace said nothing was illegal about it.

Sure—many now on, as long as everything is above board, the Lola at the Palace has an obligation to attend—okay, "witness"...every signing of every deal of any company in the private sector, is that it?

Of course, the stars must be behind the Cagayan-Nihao mining group in Jerry Angping, a long-time stockbroker who happens to be the brother of Angelo, money the trade and investments Daru Angping.

One of its shareholders is Reyes Perez, the brother of Investor and Local Government Secretary Ronaldo Perez.

In other words, the local mining group is well connected.

Never mind that, according to stock market movers, losing commercial candidate Michael Defensor, who is said to be among the Lola's favorite, was the broker of the agreement.

We all know that Defensor used to be the environment and natural resources secretary, and as such, he had a big role in the issuance of mining permits.

Last December, certain stockbrokers also got hold of information that...who else?—Defensor was also trying to arrange the presence of the Lola during the listing at the DWG of another mining company.

The president was supposed to ring the bell at the start of trading at the PSE on that particularly luring day.

Unfortunately for the mining company, but fortunately for us, the public, the Lola turned down the...well, "invitation."

But the issue stirred the ana involving Congress Alliance? Hmmm.

* * *

PALAWAN'S provincial legislature, the Sangguniang Panlalawigan, is against the inclusion of two municipalities of the province in the so-called Sangguniang Association Bill, or SAB.

The SAB is perhaps the most controversial item in the agreement between the Philippine government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front or MILF which was supposed to be signed last week.

Included in the SAB were the Palawan municipalities of Balabac and Rizal.

According to Palawan Vice Gov. David Punzo de Leon, the people of the province already held plebiscites on the issue—not only once or twice, but four times.

In each case, have plebiscites held time and again in the past 29 years, the people rejected the inclusion of any part of the province in the Muslim Mindanao region, and the ARMM.

But here's something for the books. Bal. also Mayor Isnah Ahmad is among those against the inclusion of his towns in the SAB, and Ahmad is a Muslim himself.

Ahmad said the Muslims in Balabac left Sulu and Mindanao privately in search for peace, which they found in Palawan.

In his resolution, the provincial board asked that both Balabac and Rizal not be populated by Christians and Muslims who have lived in harmony through the years.

Placing them now in the SAB may lead to problems...social and legal.

In other words, if it ain't broke, why fix it?

Affinity Express' RP operations launched

AYALA CORP. HAD IT PERMANENTLY SETTLED on its business process outsourcing investments.

In yesterday's launch of its design and graphics convenience, Affinity Express Inc., Ayala Corp. president Fernando Zobel de Ayala said the BPO sector stood to benefit from the economic slowdown in the United States, as companies there would consider outsourcing to achieve cost efficiencies.

"We continue to be very confident about this business. The growth will continue. There's no question that there are challenges in the US and other parts of the world. It is our hope that while these challenges are taking place, companies are looking for more efficient ways of producing their products or services and would look at outsourcing, as one way to achieve greater efficiencies in their costs," Zobel said.

As of August 2008, funding from Level Infrastructure Inc., Ayala Corp's vehicle in building its BPO portfolio, or the BPO space, has increased $120 million in three companies: eTelecare Global Solutions Inc., Integrated Managed Solutions Inc. and Affinity Express Inc.

Affinity Express, a leading provider of graphic and design services for corporations and their design agencies, yesterday launched its operations in Manila. It has 250 employees at its headquarters in Ortigas, Pasig City.

Affinity Express hopes to increase its total team to 2000 within the year.

Headquartered in Chicago, Illinois, the company is a leading business process outsourcing company that is 100-percent dedicated to graphic and design services. It has 800 employees and maintains production centers in Pune, India and Manila, Philippines. The company offers its services 24 hours a day and seven days a week, producing products to over 50 software packages and multiple platforms.

(SEATED) AYALA CORP. president and COO Fernando Zobel de Ayala chats with Ricardo Moran, Affinity Express president for Manila operations, during the launch. With them are (standing) Fred Ayala, CEO of LiveIT Solutions, and Affinity Express CEO Kenneth Swanson. ALEXIS ROMERO

Today, more than 6,000 companies in the newspaper, direct mail, publishing, printing and promotional products industries, as well as major corporations, rely on Affinity Express to meet their high-volume, quick turn time demands. Affinity Express has clients in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia and the Philippines.

Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

LBP asked to lend more to farm sector

By Cielo C. Chavez

THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE has requested state-controlled Land Bank of the Philippines to earmark P10 billion to P15 billion in additional loanable funds for the farm sector to help farmers cope with the surging cost of fertilizers and other inputs.

At a recent briefing, Land-bank president Gilda Pico told reporters that loan availment by the farm sector was flat as packing and that Landbank had already exceeded its original allotment for this sector for this year.

Landbank originally earmarked P5 billion in new loans for palay production and another P25 billion for other agricultural crops for this year. But as of end-July Pico said lenders loan disbursements to the palay subsector had already reached P1.1 billion and releases for other agricultural crops had hit P5 billion.

This was made possible through the increase in the number of Landbank's lending conduits, bank vice president Julio Clemente Jr. said.

He said the bank had tapped more rural banks and farmers' cooperatives to boost disbursement to the farm sector.

The bank has also lowered the interest rates on its farm loans to 6.5 percent from 14 percent last May, giving borrowers more incentive.

Pico said Landbank was ready to release more funds into the farm sector as requested by Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap, but noted that the bank would have to set up an agricultural guarantee fund to cover lending risks and prevent its asset quality.

She said the guarantee fund would cover 65 percent of potential loan losses in case of a default by the borrower. The conduit rural bank or cooperative will have to shoulder 15 percent of the loan risks.

Landbank has put up a P100-million seed money for the guarantee fund but more may be needed to enable the bank to raise its loan exposure to the farm sector by P10 billion to P15 billion.

Pico said the bank would not limit its lending to the farm sector, except that this guarantee fund issue must be resolved.

Ayala posts 45% drop in H1 income

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

A TOUGHER ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT this year took its toll on blue-chip company Ayala Corp., which reported a 45-percent drop in its first half profit to ₱6.3 billion, from ₱11.3 billion in the same period last year.

This was, according to the company, due to significantly lower capital gains and equity earnings from key operating units.

First half revenue fell to ₱68.88 billion from ₱81 billion in the same period last year.

"The pressures of rising oil and commodity prices and tightening credit globally have created a much more challenging operating environment," said Ayala president and chief operating officer Fernando Zobel de Ayala. "The while earnings have been under some pressure this year, we continue to see strong underlying demand in each of our key businesses, particularly real estate, consumer and corporate banking, telecommunications, electronics manufacturing services, automobiles and chemicals."

The income in the second quarter hit ₱3.7 billion, down 16 percent from year-ago level.

In the first semester, Ayala booked ₱1.7 billion in capital gains from the sale of 3.8 million common shares of Globe Telecom Inc. This, however, was lower than the ₱7-billion gain booked in the first half of last year. Equity earnings from operating units declined by 23 percent.

Ayala Land reported a 37-percent growth in its first half net income, with consolidated revenue up 25 percent year-on-year, buoyed by the sustained growth of its residential and commercial businesses.

Banking unit Bank of the Philippine Islands (BPI) said net income to the first half of the year was 19 percent lower at ₱1.8 billion from ₱2.7 billion a year ago. Bankard unit Globe reported a 3-percent decline in net income in the first half. Consolidated service revenue slipped by 2 percent, due mainly to lower wireless service revenue, which was mitigated by a 5-percent rise in wireline earnings. The shift in consumers' preferences to lower-cost alternatives temporarily reversed growth in fixed and value-added services. Overall demand for wireless communications was strong as Globe's subscriber base expanded by 21 percent year-on-year.

Manila Water reported a 13-percent increase in net revenue in the first half of the year to ₱1.4 billion from ₱1.3 billion a year ago.

Bill posted a net loss of ₱3.6 million due to currency hedging-related transactions. Revenues, however, was up 14 percent year-on-year due to higher volumes from key customers. Including losses from the currency hedging contracts, Bill's net income would have been up 31 percent year-on-year.

Ayala's BPO investment companies continued to generate positive performance. Liberated Syrup Company Odyssey will increase its annual capacity to serve growth on Aug. 13.

Ayala chair Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala said, "We expect operating conditions to remain challenging for the balance of this year and perhaps into early next year as we continue to feel the pressure from higher inflation and interest rates. However, we believe the fundamentals of each of our businesses remain solid and are are optimistic that as global markets adjust and normalize, we are well-positioned."

Coconut exports up 30% in first semester

By Amy R. Remo

PHILIPPINE COCONUT EXPORTS rose 30.6 percent in June to 139,280 metric tons in copra terms from 113,048 MT in the same month last year, preliminary data of the United Coconut Associations of the Philippines showed.

The June shipment brought total coconut exports in the first half of the year to 825,937 MT, almost 30 percent higher than the 713,522 MT a year ago.

According to Ocap, oil export products in June refloated year-on-year as world demand increased, which has been in the negative territory since the start of the year.

During the month, coconut oil exports rose 23.1 percent to 84,695 MT in copra terms from 68,962 MT a year ago. Of this, 53.2 percent or 45,306 MT went to Europe and 34.8 percent of the total or 29,510 MT went to the United States.

Other markets for coconut oil were Japan and China.

Copra meal shipments for the month also rose 17.8 percent to 41,658 MT from 35,340 MT a year ago. Korea accounted for 46.4 percent of the total or 27,600 MT, while Vietnam bought 18,470 tons, or 25.2 percent. The balance went to Japan.

LIFESTYLE Wellness

Editor Thelma Sioson San Juan

SPORTS enthusiasts join the North Face and Neweekend Outdoor Recharge trail running ultra-marathon in Nasugbu, Batangas.

Surviving an ultra-marathon

By Mitch Felipe
Contributor

NORTH FACE 100, THE longest ultra-marathon race in Philippine history, pushed the limits of the country's experienced runners around Mt. Talamitam in Nasugbu, Batangas.

Out of 95 participants who started the 100-km race at 7:30 a.m. last July 26, only 36 finished the event categories. Cutoff time for the whole 100-km distance was set at 30 hours. For the solo 100-km event, the last participant came in at 1:09 p.m. the next day.

An ultra-marathon is longer than the traditional full marathon 142.195 km) and usually done in varied terrain, dirt road and trail path with some river crossings.

I decided to join two weeks before the race. My goal was to finish the 50-km loop with a partner who is physically and mentally prepared to complete the full 100-km route.

Next is the most important weapon to stay recharged for more than nine hours of running. For the whole 50 kilometers, I was able to consume two liters of sports drinks, almost two liters of water, three chocolate bars, raisins, two bananas and crackers of food at logistical point stations.

There were around 20 water stations, but coffee to cool nauseous, distances between stations were not uniform. During the race, I needed to sip liquid every 15 minutes and eat for every 1.5 hours to survive every kilometer.

Buy shoes early

Buy trail running shoes weeks or months before the event. I bought mine two days

SURVIVING ▷

imagine your desires reflected in a phone.

Beauty is nothing without substance. That is why Samsung believes form meets if packed function. The J700 is attractively sleek and puts all the multimedia functions you need at the touch of your fingers. With the new Samsung J700, getting everything you desire in a phone is not that hard to imagine.

ph.samsungmobile.com

J700

TOLL FREE 1-800-1SAMSUNG

SAMSUNG

RAINMAKER Marvel Basconcillo with our host, man of the hour Mike Ocampo, and Nina Bonoan

EATON Ong, Mike Chong, Edwin Ong and Dion Olson

IVAN Yao and Dennis Sierra

ENJOYING the super Indian dinner are, Mala Fernandez and Pepper Tenbenbee

Feast of Italian food and superb wines

What else could I say but 'Bravo!'

IT WAS MY DISCOVERY OF THE WEEK, darlings. It's been there for a couple of months now and I've heard nothing but raves about it, so when our boss invited for a wine dinner evening at one of the few authentic Indian restaurants in the country, Maurice Restaurant, I had to go.

To start the ball rolling, that super talented chef Rinaldo Cibelli (We even share the same name—Maurice is Mauricio in Italian, now) served the divine appetizer trio of Brussels lasagna (diced beef), Caprese Mozzarella Buffala and Insalata di Polpo (Octopus salad), served with a crisp and fruity Pecorabelli Pecorino Bianco. Absolutely yummy.

This was followed by the to die for Tagliatelle Cinghiale (wild boar sauce) and Risotto with Porcini Mushroom, served with Barolo Gozzini DOM, a classic Cosecha Rosso blend from Australia that blew my socks off. It was excellent.

The main dish was everyone's favourite—Aragosta Alla Catalana (lobster Catalana sauce, served with Frascobaldi Nippozzano Riserva, a fabulous Chianti Bellisa. To cap this excellently prepared dinner, Chef Maurizio served his homemade Gelato, paired with Bindocining Noble Late Harvest.

Ah, what else could I say but "Bravo!"

Totally enjoying this feast of local and exotic wines were Jacy and Ray Lenin Mauries Aguinaco, Hannah Julie Hardi Hernandez, hostess of the dinner Kelka Dean-

TALENTED chef of Maurice restaurant, Maurice Gibbi (with a bottle of Frascobaldi Nippozzano)

PHILIPPINES' New Top Model winner Grizelda Alvarado

AMY Lucas, Rocca Encinares, Alma Cui and Bay Lucas

AMY Perez-Gil, Rocca Santos, Raymond Lee, Jay Diego and Mark Mendoza

WINE sponsor Future Trade International's Stewart Dowty and wife Shiela D., chef Maurizio, Robert and Geneviève Burrough, Eric Kank and Dennis Pineda

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by Alex Van Hagen using PIXEL Photo Solutions

Canon Digital Inas in Boracay

Over 50,000 tourists flocked to Boracay during the last Christmas-New Year season, would you believe?

As of last week, tour was there again for three more happenings, with different resorts and bars dangling attractive carrots to attract the crowd in their open. Lots of parties were also organized to launch different sorts of products.

Among them, The Beach House '08, presented by Double 23 and Canon, was definitely a smashing success.

"Canon redefines the concept of dazzling colors in Boracay by launching the new Digital Ixus 80 IS," announced Canon's young marketing manager, Katrina Theresa. "Five sophisticated metallic colors are available to match this gravesome. It's what taking a photo is all about."

Three huge Indian were organized to entertain's dancing delights, paintings. There were tans—and not enough tans!—of beach lovers all over. The atmosphere was absolutely spectacular.

Merrymakers, not couldn't miss spotting MTV VJ Kat Alano; Myx VJ JC Buendia; FE-Ako model Rich Herrera; and yes!, to screen Michelle Madrigal, darlings.

Also I left, out was told that free medicine—time trade and one female—dashed to the cool waters to "chill out" from all the hot and cold dancing that was going on. Phew!

Four lucky pairs got to take home the photo role of "new couples" during the speed-dating game. The winning participants each received a package from Canon and luxe goodies from Gucci and Tag-Dan.

Yeah, that kind of partying is best captured in living color by Canon Inas, with its flavor of delighting consumers with nothing but the best features. Congratulations to "Pinkfine" Inc. young presidents Franck Reinares for a good job.

PINOY hunk James Zablan

MALOU Coronel-De Venecia, Cinderella marketing director; Sori Yap of Mega Publishing; and Therese Coronel-Santos, Cinderella EVP

KATRINA Theresa, assistant marketing manager of Canon

FRANK Briones, president of Thinkbox Advertising and the main man behind Canon's success in Boracay

DONNIE Ramirez of Metro magazine with Cinderella's Reina Coronel-Ramos

FASHION photographer Sara Black and Cinderella head designer Dennis Castillo

CHIEF Yen of Lundbeck Mathilde Santos Pe, Cinderella merchandising manager for Ladies Local Brands; Gretchen Fellido of TV Patrol; and Anna Abunda Alunan, president of School of Fashion and the Arts

BRADJUAN Nadia Bruce Alva

SPEED-dating game winners Michael Dua and Angelo Bong

RICH Herrera and MTV VJ Kat Alano

Powered by Clickability

Giving 'hilot' its due

By Rica Panuncio Regis
Contributor

A MANGHILOT/HILOT IS A LOCAL HEALER who cures illnesses through touch, herbs, charged water, incantations or passive remedies.

When I was a child, I remember how Nana, our grandmother, took care of my sister Abili, whose itchy and watery skin rashes did not improve with medicines and vitaminsa prescribed by our in-house doctor, my uncle.

In the privacy of her home, Nana asked my sister to stand on her knees and, while chanting prayer chants, she poured warm water with pounded herbs on her blistered body. In no time, Abili's skin allergies disappeared.

Abili's memory of healing was reawakened when she witnessed a Jobs Hunting on Hilot Bayanihan facilitated by Bibiano Bajenia, who is a chemical engineer and a PhD holder, but who takes pride in being called arcalBalanyo, hilot and herbalist.

As age 27, in the midst of his extensive exploration of the mystical power of amulets and oralisms (power words), Bibiano was stricken with muscular dystrophy, an incurable illness. Economic reasons obliged him to return to treatment by arcalBalanyo.

Bibiano did not only regain health. He delved deep into the study of hilot and herbs and committed to heal and share with other people his knowledge of chemistry as applied in the healing power of herbs.

Indigenous practices

Our local arBalanyos have been therapeutically called "quacks" by society. It is only

"HILOT is based on the alignment of our body, mind and emotions to the universal and cosmic powers."

with the recent acceptance of indigenous and traditional practices in different countries...acupuncture in China, ayurveda in India, homeopathy in Europe, tribal healing...(that are now traditional) healing arts have slowly been recognized by many doctors and government sectors.

To develop and promote hilot, Abili and Bibiano created ACBag (Association of Traditional Health Care Givers). In less than four years, this Filipino traditional healing art has been represented in wellness exhibitions in Singapore, Oman and Japan.

Barangay health workers from Quezon, Barangay, Marikina and Cogtayan were trained on the natures of hilot and on the planting and uses of herbs, which improved those people's livelihood. Hilot therapists were also trained and sent abroad to administer our traditional hilot in world-class spas catering to international audiences.

This Filipino traditional healing art is gaining widespread acceptance even abroad

DEMONSTRATING Hilot techniques, Health workers from Quezon, Barangay, Marikina and Cogtayan have trained on the traditional healing method.

Being a natural researcher and a scientist, Bibiano has the advantage of translating the albularyo's terms not only into common-sense language but also into scientific terms.

"Hilot is based on the alignment of our body, mind and emotions to the universal and natural laws," said Bibiano. The training of the hilot is not limited to the skill of manually dissolving energy blockages in the veins, muscles and nerves to relieve body pains.

"Kung ako ito ka, hindi ko makakapagpanot [If you are invisible, you cannot heal]," said Bibiano.

The slogan he uses to stay cool is "Malusot, matalubsan, mahipagupahin! [Good for soil, good for others, good for the environment]."

For inquiries about Albay's public hilot training seminars, call 0917-6488 or (052) 3420269.

Detoxify naturally with Bottled lemongrass tea
660-2197, 658-4779
rizaldary@yahoo.com

Surviving an ultra-marathon

From page C1

before the race. Before the 10th kilometer mark, the muscles disintegrated. Luckily, I survived the 40-km race without the most preventive part of the shoes.

To finish the race, you really need to have proper training. But winning this tough race is another story. Pepito Desperas, once all winner for 200-km solo, finished the race in 13 hours and 11 minutes. According to him, he was training for 20-40 kilometers on most days of the week as preparation for the 108-km race.

Endurance is just a part of an ultra-marathoner's training program. You must also be sure and have total training for great balancing tasks required in the steep and slippery descent trail paths.

The race also requires one with strong lower body muscles to be able to climb the mountain trails and complete the inclined ski trails.

PEPITO Desperas wins first place in the 108-km race.

Take it easy

We were all strong enough to run even after the 20th kilometer. I did not bring a watch to avoid extra mental pressure. Just before crossing the 29-meter Pagbilao River, one runner said that we just finished the 22nd kilometer in three hours and 15 minutes.

In a 42-km road marathon, one can cover the same distance in almost two hours. For a race like this, you have to walk and climb slowly as required by the paths. So one is not expected to finish a 56-km distance in five hours.

Enjoying the company of the other participants will help you endure the long journey.

For an inexperienced trail runner like me, I allowed the runners to go ahead of me so I can see how they will approach the muddy trails, river crossings, steep climbs and descents.

I felt light-headed while approaching the 36th kilometer, thanks to one runner who assisted me in crossing the third river. Knowing what to expect now, I will surely bring a buddy to run with me next time.

Walking like a lost child, I arrived at Inverness base camp at 5 p.m. and saw my race partner, Rex Tejada, waiting for me with excitement.

I finished my 56-km task at nine hours and 38 minutes. I knew by then that we will reach the cut-off time of 36 hours considering Rex's four allowance since he will be running in darkness.

After another 14 hours and 45 minutes, he successfully reached the finish line. We were third place in the relay-mixed category and was only a minute ahead of the other team who ended fourth.

E-mail the author at rolelight-fpt@gmail.com

MEDICard, The Healthcare I Deserve!

Take Charge Doc!
Skin and body care, the HUMANA way (Part 4)

New-Life: A Fresh Approach to Skin and Body Care

New Life uses R.E.A.M. (Re Electrical Acceleration Technology) which accurately and precisely imitates the body's bio-electrical process. The resulting pre-defined electrical pulses from the machine mix the nervous system. R.E.A.M. seems to natural harmony with the body and is completely safe. Also, it accelerates the body's own processes. It is a quick and reliable method of realizing the body's potential.

After a treatment session with R.E.A.M., muscles have been toned under optimal conditions. As a result, muscles become stronger and more defined. The simulated muscle causes immediate circumferential reduction and leaves the client with tighter, younger and healthier looking skin.

New-Life's R.E.A.M. technology can be used for:

- Circumferential Reduction
- Face Lifting and Tightening
- Body Contouring
- Breast and Buttocks Lifting
- Fine Wrinkles
- Acne Treatment
- Lymphatic Drainage, and
- Anti-Cellulite Massage
- Volumetric Dermal Therapy and
- Wrinkle Treatment.

Before

After
12 treatments
Loss of 10 cm on stomach area

You may call 920-3184 or 920-6427 for more information.

Manners are taught in finishing school.
Good taste is acquired from Mang Narciso.

Mang Narciso gets an A for good taste in coffee. His problems: high quality coffee beans because he attends free training and seminars at the Visayas Experimental & Demo Farm (VEDF); VEDF access to planting materials and high quality coffee seedlings. Isn't it amazing to think that Mang Narciso is just one of the 30,000 Filipino coffee farmers supported by NESCAFÉ?
So every sip you enjoy from your cup, you owe it to the expertise of Mang Narciso.

Look at coffee in a different way

NESCAFÉ

Coco vinegar helps treat sinus congestion

DURING THE FRENCH AND INDIAN War in 1754, a woman named Martha Curtis chanced with George Washington in a ball. Legend has it that she had caught his eye from across the room because of her radiant complexion. After one dance she had won his heart. Bewitched by her beauty, he married her four years later. Its here is Martha's beauty secret.

Martha's facial: Beat 1 egg, add 1 teaspoon honey and ½ teaspoon apple cider vinegar. Apply to face and neck. After 15-20 minutes, rinse with warm water and dry. Do this weekly.

Hippocrates, the Father of Medicine used vinegar to treat his patients in 400 BC. The Babylonians, in 5,000 BC reported it as a cure-all. The Assyrians, Greeks and Egyptians used it to treat sore infections, bleeding wounds, loss of appetite, gangrene, poor digestion and testicular disorders.

Apple cider and red wine vinegar which are made from whole apples and red grapes could help you enjoy the following:

- Fight fat
- Enhance the body's immune system
- Lower blood pressure
- Lessen risk of heart disease
- Prevent cancer
- Slow down the aging process

Because apple cider vinegar has alkalizing minerals such as potassium, magnesium, calcium and iron as well as trace chemicals in the body to fight infection.

Red wine vinegar, like apple cider, contains polyphenols—natural antioxidants which fends off free radical damage—catechin...flavonoids and bioflavonoids, quercetin—an allergy suppressing agent which has protective & can maintain disorders, stress and—a compound which may have anti-cancer and anti-heart disease properties.

INSIDE OUT
Cory Quirino

Are you overweight? If you answered yes, then apple cider may be the solution. Just 2 tablespoons in a cup of water each morning before breakfast will definitely keep you energized and fit.

Coco power

Coco vinegar's "sweet" flavor comes from the coconut or sap that drips from a newly-formed coconut flower bud as compared to other vinegars which come from flowers and baby coconuts). Rich in potassium, calcium, sodium and magnesium like its "foreign cousins," it is used as medicine to lower blood sugar, clear acne, treat athlete's foot and sinus congestion.

Studies indicate that coconut vinegar is plentiful in 9 vitamin and oil and its derivative DH (inositol hexaphosphate) which prevents from the formation of cancer. Call Sonogue. Need list...at (2722227) 3918.63.0813.

While there are many other vinegar varieties like rice, balsamic malt and herbal vinegar, when choosing, look for the organically grown.

Note: Not everyone can stomach vinegar, it could be more acidic to those who are already highly acidic by nature. So, clear with your doctor first.

Tips

Soundoff using: Rub apple cider vinegar on **tongue on the scalp.** Leave for 1 minute. Rinse. Repeat daily.

Bugs off: Rub apple cider vinegar on the insect bites to remove the itch.

Freckle fader: Rub medicine ball lemon that adding horseradish in your vinegar makes for skin lightener.

Acne fighter: Mix 2 teaspoons of vinegar in cup of water. Dab on blemishes 3x a day after washing your face.

Natural astringent: Mix 1 teaspoon of coco vinegar in 1 cup of cool water. Use on sun steak to eliminate the dark.

Weight loss helper: Mix 2 teaspoons of apple cider/coco vinegar in a cup of warm water. Drink first thing in the morning before exercise.

Tantrum relief: Splash white vinegar and water and be soothed instantly.

Affirm: "I attract only reverence in my life."

Love and light!

Reference: "BK...Answer's Revolutionary Cancer Fighter"—Dr. Abel Kahen M. Sharm-addin, PhD "The Healing Powers of Vinegar" by Cal Orey

Celebrity dads and breastfeeding

BRAD Pitt and SHIVA

TOM Cruise and Suri

BEN Affleck and Violet Anne

AS THE STORK CONTINUES to deliver celebrity BabyBumps and to deliver celebrity babies, the world is able to catch a glimpse of famous couples and their new roles as parents.

Even with their busy schedules, A-list moms like Julia Roberts, Gwyneth Paltrow, and Angelina Jolie are able to find more cancer and life to give time to breastfeed their children.

And how about the equally famous dads?

Leading men like Michael Douglas, Kevin Costner, John Travolta, **Bruce Willis and Tom Hanks** are more than willing to play the supporting role to their wives role: **the primary role in feeding.**

Young dads like Brad Pitt, Will Smith, Matthew Broderick, Ben Affleck, Matt Damon, Ryan Phillippe and Johnny Depp share the virtues of their wives on the importance of breastfeeding.

Tobey Maguire took on a different job after Spiderman when **partner Jennifer Aniston** gave birth to daughter Ruby Immerhaus. He joked that since he cannot assist in breastfeeding, he cook-on-diaper-duties.

"I cannot breastfeed so I like to change the diapers," said Maguire. "I'm fine with the taking off and the clean-up part, but parting it back on I feel like it's too tight and I like it to be loose...but you can't make it too loose. I take so long and I'm so careful, while Anniston it is a blink. But I like to... I want to participate in every way with my daughter."

Not to be outdone, Mission Impossible star Tom Cruise said in an interview that he was not afraid to get his hands dirty when it **comes to caring for four-year-old** daughter Suri with Katie Holmes.

"I change diapers all the time," said Cruise. "I have to tell you, I love it. We have a whole system worked out. The dogs do the breastfeeding and I do the burping and changing the diapers. It's teamwork. It's fun."

Patrick Dempsey added to his McDreaminess when he was spotted taking his wife Jill and their twin boys Darby Calvin and Sullivan Patrick at The Pump Station, Los Angeles' premier breastfeeding resource.

Comedians Sasha Baron Cohen, Adam Sandler and Will Ferrell are in a serious mood when it comes to breastfeeding. And **rumor-dads like Rod Stewart,** soul singer Seal, Coldplay front man Chris Martin, and Hank Azaria reunited Linda Hamilton on finding new ways to cooing lullabies to their kids.

These celebrity dads show how essential the role of father is in making breastfeeding successful, to give their babies a healthy start in life.

PIERCE Brosnan and wife Keely Shaye Smith with son Dylan Thomas

PATRICK Dempsey and twin boys Darby Ryker and Sullivan Patrick

Reason for a soulmate encounter

INNER AWARENESS
Jaime T. Hanson

FOR OVER 20 YEARS NOW I have been conducting a regular monthly seminar/workshop on "Soulmates, Karma and Reincarnation" where participants undergo two light hypnotic regressions to remember their past lives, and a life they have had with a lover or any chosen subject. Aside from this, I have written many articles and given numerous talks about the subject both here and abroad. I have also given count less interviews on both radio and television programs.

Despite all these, numerous questions about soulmates persist up to now. "Do soulmates really exist? How do I know if I have met my soulmate? Why do people seldom meet their soulmates if they exist? Is life without a soulmate full of bliss and the complete never quiet? Should a person leave his present spouse or partner if he has met his soulmate? How can you meet your soulmate?" etc."

As I have pointed out so many times before, the concept of soulmate cannot be understood except in the context of reincarnation or multiple rebirth, for one does not meet his or her soulmate except after a series of incarnations on the earth plane. So, unless one has had a belief in the concept or theory of reincarnation, the idea of a soulmate doesn't make sense.

Although celebrity dads like Brad Pitt, Will Smith, Matthew Broderick, Ben Affleck, Matt Damon, Ryan Phillippe and Johnny Depp share the virtues of their wives on the importance of breastfeeding, he took on diaper duties.

Tobey Maguire took on a different job after Spiderman when partner Jennifer Aniston gave birth to daughter Ruby Immerhaus. He joked that since he cannot assist in breastfeeding, he took on diaper duties.

"I cannot breastfeed so I like to change the diapers," said Maguire. "I'm fine with the taking off and the clean-up part, but putting it back on I feel like it's too tight and I like it to be loose...but you can't make it too loose. I take so long and I'm so careful, while Anniston it is a blink. But I like to... I want to participate in every way with my daughter."

Not to be outdone, Mission Impossible star Tom Cruise said in an interview that he was not afraid to get his hands dirty when it comes to caring for four-year-old daughter Suri with Katie Holmes.

"I change diapers all the time," said Cruise. "I have to tell you, I love it. We have a whole system worked out. The dogs do the breastfeeding and I do the burping and changing the diapers. It's teamwork. It's fun."

Patrick Dempsey added to his McDreaminess when he was spotted taking his wife Jill and their twin boys Darby Calvin and Sullivan Patrick at The Pump Station, Los Angeles' premier breastfeeding resource.

Comedians Sasha Baron Cohen, Adam Sandler and Will Ferrell are in a serious mood when it comes to breastfeeding. And **rumor-dads like Rod Stewart,** soul singer Seal, Coldplay front man Chris Martin, and Hank Azaria reunited Linda Hamilton on finding new ways to cooing lullabies to their kids.

These celebrity dads show how essential the role of father is in making breastfeeding successful, to give their babies a healthy start in life.

Jaime T. Hanson

FOR OVER 20 YEARS NOW I have been conducting a regular monthly seminar/workshop on "Soulmates, Karma and Reincarnation" where participants undergo two light hypnotic regressions to remember their past lives, and a life they have had with a lover or any chosen subject. Aside from this, I have written many articles and given numerous talks about the subject both here and abroad. I have also given count less interviews on both radio and television programs.

Despite all these, numerous questions about soulmates persist up to now. "Do soulmates really exist? How do I know if I have met my soulmate? Why do people seldom meet their soulmates if they exist? Is life without a soulmate full of bliss and the complete never quiet? Should a person leave his present spouse or partner if he has met his soulmate? How can you meet your soulmate?" etc."

As I have pointed out so many times before, the concept of soulmate cannot be understood except in the context of reincarnation or multiple rebirth, for one does not meet his or her soulmate except after a series of incarnations on the earth plane. So, unless one has had a belief in the concept or theory of reincarnation, the idea of a soulmate doesn't make sense.

Although celebrity dads like Brad Pitt, Will Smith, Matthew Broderick, Ben Affleck, Matt Damon, Ryan Phillippe and Johnny Depp share the virtues of their wives on the importance of breastfeeding, he took on diaper duties.

Tobey Maguire took on a different job after Spiderman when partner Jennifer Aniston gave birth to daughter Ruby Immerhaus. He joked that since he cannot assist in breastfeeding, he took on diaper duties.

"I cannot breastfeed so I like to change the diapers," said Maguire. "I'm fine with the taking off and the clean-up part, but putting it back on I feel like it's too tight and I like it to be loose...but you can't make it too loose. I take so long and I'm so careful, while Anniston it is a blink. But I like to... I want to participate in every way with my daughter."

Not to be outdone, Mission Impossible star Tom Cruise said in an interview that he was not afraid to get his hands dirty when it comes to caring for four-year-old daughter Suri with Katie Holmes.

"I change diapers all the time," said Cruise. "I have to tell you, I love it. We have a whole system worked out. The dogs do the breastfeeding and I do the burping and changing the diapers. It's teamwork. It's fun."

Patrick Dempsey added to his McDreaminess when he was spotted taking his wife Jill and their twin boys Darby Calvin and Sullivan Patrick at The Pump Station, Los Angeles' premier breastfeeding resource.

Comedians Sasha Baron Cohen, Adam Sandler and Will Ferrell are in a serious mood when it comes to breastfeeding. And **rumor-dads like Rod Stewart,** soul singer Seal, Coldplay front man Chris Martin, and Hank Azaria reunited Linda Hamilton on finding new ways to cooing lullabies to their kids.

These celebrity dads show how essential the role of father is in making breastfeeding successful, to give their babies a healthy start in life.

Blood sugar screenings set

AS PART OF ITS CURRENT GAMBIT THAT encourages consumers to eat good and take charge of their health, Healthy Options has **partnered with Johnson & Johnson Medical to** launch Sugar Check, a series of blood sugar screenings conducted on scheduled dates at Healthy Options branches.

First launched last July, which coincided with the celebration of Diabetes Week, the Sugar Check Campaign does a crawl at the Healthy Options flagship branch at Shangri-La Plaza Mall in Mandaluyong City. Soon it will be moving to key provincial cities.

Using Johnson & Johnson Medical's innovative OneTouch Ultra 2 blood glucose monitoring device which adheres to the ISO 15197 standard of accuracy and precision, consumers will be able to instantaneously determine their blood glucose level.

Blood glucose monitoring allows a person to know his blood glucose level at any time and helps prevent the immediate and potentially serious consequences of very high or very low blood glucose. Hyperglycemia, or low blood sugar, occurs when the blood glucose level drops too low to provide enough energy for the body's activities. Meanwhile, glucose levels that remain high, on the other hand, can over-work and damage the eyes, kidneys, nerves, and blood vessels. Monitoring can help avert the long-term risks of diabetic complications.

Blood sugar screenings are scheduled 4-7 p.m. at the following dates and Healthy Options branches:

Aug. 16 & 17, Shangri-La Plaza Mall, Mandaluyong; Aug. 24, Trillonus, QC; Aug. 17 & 23, SM City Clark; Aug. 31 & Sept. 6, SM City Cebu; Aug. 30 & Sept. 7, SM City Davao.

SUGAR Check, a project of Healthy Options and Johnson & Johnson Medical

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Bonnie G. Velarde

Website: www.inquirer.net/entertainment

Use boldface: Inquirer entertainment's message to 2899 (Globe) and 583 (Smart)
or email us at entertainment@inquirer.com.ph

Overheard

Who, me?

SCARLETT JOHANSSON, PAUL SAYS SHE WAS EMBARRASSED by the media coverage of her ex-added "a small relationship" with Barack Obama: "It seemed to me to be like a product of extreme sexism, and I kept thinking to myself, 'God, if this was Jon, Jim, Ed Drew or George Clooney or any of the other Obama surrogates or supporters ... there wouldn't be [any] question about it. Nobody would even talk about it."

AP

TV 5 launch

INQUIRER was a guest on Sunday night when TV5 presented an exclusive show at the SMX of the Mall of Asia. New programs were announced and their hosts were introduced, including, from left: Regine Tolentino, "My MVP" reality talent search; Sam Concepcion (in red stripes), who hosts the cast of new show "Laughter"; and Iza Calzado, who stars in the drama series "Prinsesa." Full story tomorrow

Benjie Paras finds new love

DOLLY WOOD
Daily Inquirer Correspondent

FORMER BASKETBALL STAR BENJIE Paras is done with dribbling his heart around. He's now happy with his charming wife Ly Okumarupo.

"Tinanggap niya ako and my two kids (with actress Andrea Ferrer) — no questions asked," says Ly. "Sa kinB's ones, we still have our own kids. Ly stopped working as a teacher to take care of me and my kids. Ako na lang ang student niya. Sometimes she corrects my grammar (laughs)."

Ly is also tutorial. Isn't she gonna join show biz? "There were offers but

BENJIE Paras with wife Ly Okumarupo

she prefers a quiet life. She's done on TV so it's always only with Marital Status. "I love her! Ly changed his outlook of love after his turbulent past! She's six years younger than me. We're in our 30s. Gusto na ako ng young girls. Sabi ng ate 'yon. With Ly, around na ako. Last year, I forgot my birthday. Pinagalitan ya ako."

Paraj has finally cooked his heart for the winning shot.

Comic duo

IF "JUDGE" were an Olympics for comedy, Dolphy and Vic Sotto would be gold and silver medalists, respectively.

The Comedy King teams the Man Often Known as RVQ Productions, M-Eye Films and MVP Entertainment's "Enteng Ng Ina Mo, Part 2 Pwedeh," opening Aug. 13.

It's about an aging errant comedy giant (cook Dolphy) and his daughter (Kim Samson) who lead a quiet life till the mom's new mentor (Vic) falls in love with Kim.

As a new grandpa, Vic is flaring too. "When my baby like-cries, Dad would ask, 'What's wrong, baby? Tell Ama?'," Dimples says. "I can't help but laugh kasi gulat pa ako sa mga nangyayari sa kin."

We're not any other name plus Dolphy spells laughter anytime.

Going strong

JHONG Cuenca and Isabel Oli's true yours and seven months relationship is going strong. "Sobrin ito sa shirtless na lang ang wallpaper. Pawal siya nalaga na gamit ng kanyonin ko," exclaims Jhie. His phone has Isabel's pic on it, too. "Pero siyang alam ko with her ex pa ang suot two-piece (laughs)."

He probably wants to keep her sexy poses for his eyes only.

TV masterpiece

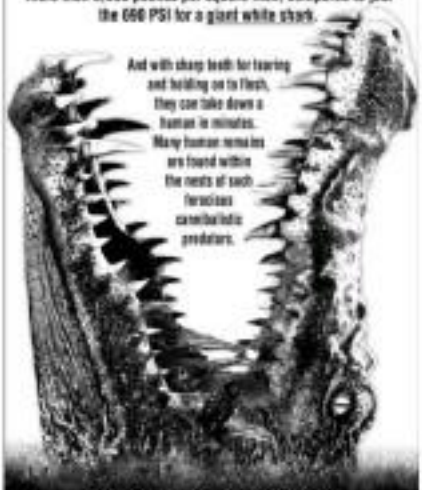
GMA 7 unveils a TV masterpiece via "Obra" (Thursdays starting Aug. 14 after "Dalplo Ajong"). It features Kapuso stars in four stories about love, life and sacrifice.

In pressure offering, "Obra," pre-

DON'T GET EATEN TOMORROW

FACT: THE ROGUE CROCODYLIDAE PREDATOR HAVE EVOLVED LITTLE SINCE THE JURASSIC AGE.

Super powerful jaws capable of biting down with immense force - the strongest bite of any beast, with a bite force of more than 5,000 pounds per square inch, compared to just the 600 PSI for a giant white shark.



RADHA MITCHELL MICHAEL VARTAN
ROGUE

GARFIELD — By Jim Davis

A. LIPIN — By Jose Abeleda

TULDOK — By Hans Coll

PUSAO BARDY — By Ryn. Junior

DIVINE COMEDY — By Steven Pabalinas

MAKAKOSENSE — By Jomar Tejico

SALAMIN — By Darwin Perez

BABY BLUES — By Jerry Scott

ATOMO AND WEBBY — By Lira Garcellano

LOVEMONOTE — By Elizabeth Chongco

BINO MACHINE — By Haabe Abeto

BEN — By Darrell Bastian

DAILY CROSSWORD

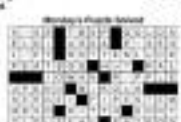
ACROSS
1 Ultra-dashing
5 Bernhardt's sister
10 Swindler's work
14 Spartan's surrender
15 Weight of land
16 Gen. Joe Brown
17 Cheese spring to Cowboy's mouth?
19 Pitcher Bobby
20 Harness
21 Huge
22 Drive up for
23 Overhang routine
24 "Rattler" manufacturer
25 Actress Hunter
26 Gamesmanship rule
31 Down Under gem
37 Rendition
38 Kind of cousin?
40 Uprights leader
41 Nobody's friends
42 Type of bridge
43 Famous fan
44 Fence-sitter's cry
46 Tortoise
47 Add to an order
48 Tall Polish citizen
49 Thin cut of cheese
50 Distant relations
51 Movie 4
52 Point of interest
53 Wrestler's warrant?
57 Locale's measure
58 Wing of Congress
59 Weakening known
60 Ate was spoken
61 Poker player's
62 Produce a BYO setting?
63 Cellar-to-light
64 Empowers
65 Wiretap: Abbr.
66 Famous cowboy cookie

DOWN
1 Hitch puppet
2 Pre-alcohol
3 Former planet
4 Rock-bottom
5 Abbott's partner
6 Fledgling's comment
7 Sasses up
8 Tax agency
9 Oil or lasso
10 Cosmetic mark
11 Handbill, basically
12 Lean measure
13 Wing of Congress
18 Weakening known
19 Ate was spoken
24 Poker player's
25 Produce a BYO setting?
27 Cellar-to-light
28 Empowers
29 Wiretap: Abbr.
30 Famous cowboy cookie
31 Hinds
32 Oil or lasso
33 Fuss over the game
36 Dinners send
39 Wordsmiths
40 One of the U.S. Virgin Islands
43 Plugging away
44 Confidently or mindlessly
45 Tiny bit
46 Tiny bit
47 Heroic
48 Tiny bit
49 Tiny bit
50 Tiny bit
51 Tiny bit
52 Tiny bit
53 Tiny bit
54 Tiny bit
55 Tiny bit
56 Tiny bit
57 Tiny bit
58 Tiny bit
59 Tiny bit
60 Tiny bit
61 Tiny bit
62 Tiny bit
63 Tiny bit
64 Tiny bit
65 Tiny bit
66 Tiny bit

By Hanna Stemberg
San Francisco, Cal.

8/13/08

Monday's Puzzle Solved



HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

FOR BORN TODAY: In one way, you're flamboyant, and in another way you're serious about whatever you're doing. You express passion and intellect, and often do things in order to please others. You like history, food and politics. You have a very sharp mind. This year's New Moon in your birth sign is an especially good time for you. Chance years: Birthdays of Bruno Kirschwood, actor; Ana Ivy Mendez, astronomer; Rafael Marquez, baseball player.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): This is also a wonderful time for you in romance and general happiness. New affairs, flirtations, sporting events, vacations and pleasant activities will be enjoyable.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Romantic opportunities in social life and work, you're in the spotlight. Your home, family and domestic issues, too, in a great time for family activities.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Your busy pace continues. You have something new and exciting to tell others. Short trips, new contacts and work for you and for business are positive.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): You could be in for financial opportunities or you're selling, and your own cash flow. Some of you are getting thoughts to changing jobs or how to adapt to a new one.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): You have a lot of activity swirling around you, you still want time to be to yourself to ponder things and make your own way to bring. Try to find some quiet time.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Creative activity is not of activity swirling around you, you still want time to be to yourself to ponder things and make your own way to bring. Try to find some quiet time.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Talk to friends and groups about your long-term goals and dreams for the future. Do you have a project in your life? Do you know where you want to go?

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): You have a spotlight and others spotlight on you. Use caring attention to one responsibility, such as work, vacation and gifts. Extra cards. May can you to use your personal skills this for all it's worth.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You want to maximize some social opportunities, but you have some romantic issues consulting issues to volunteer organizations, hobbies, and self-help. Another.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): You want to maximize some social opportunities, but you have some romantic issues consulting issues to volunteer organizations, hobbies, and self-help. Another.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Relations with partners and partnerships are positive now. Use these people's list of attributes. It's just what's happening.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Set aside some time to get back to organized habits of your life. Don't let it slip. You want to talk to the right people.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis SudoKu — By Dave Green

8			5		6			3
	4		2	9	8		1	
1		8		4		9		6
		9	8		1	4		
4		2		3		1		7
	3		6	8	4		2	
2			3		7			8

Difficulty Level ★★ 8/13

©2008 Conceptis Puzzles, Dist. by King Features Syndicate, Inc.

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and programs at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

4	9	1	2	7	5	8	6	3
6	2	3	8	1	4	5	9	7
8	7	5	6	3	9	1	2	4
5	3	2	9	4	8	6	7	1
9	6	7	1	5	2	3	4	8
1	4	8	3	6	7	9	5	2
3	5	9	4	8	6	2	1	7
7	1	4	5	2	3	6	8	9
2	8	6	7	9	1	4	3	5

Uphill battle for 'chick flicks'

LOS ANGELES—WHEN "SEX and the City" debuted at No. 1 at the box office earlier this year, fans recognized the unusual success of a film about women aimed at women, and industry watchers forecast more of the same ahead.

But female writers, directors and producers say the blockbuster is an exception in the general Hollywood rule that films about women get second-class treatment compared with big-budget action flicks like the Batman movie, "The Dark Knight," which is aimed at young men.

Less lucrative

"Some women are businesses aimed for Hollywood—fewer movies as women's films.

Underlying the dilemma is that box office prospects for "chick flicks" are generally seen as less lucrative than for adventure movies such as "Dark Knight." (True, major studios make fewer of them and they get less money for production and marketing.

"Women are often interested in story, true emotions and rounded characters," said Erica Huggins, director of "The Women," set for a September debut. "We find action flicks less interesting because they lack those elements."

Last week, "The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants 2" opened in US theaters as the latest example of a girl-oriented film that hopes to become a breakout box office hit. It's about the friendship of four college girls.

But neither "Sex," which opened in late May and grossed nearly $375 million worldwide, "Traveling Pants" does not benefit from a built-in audience of a major television hit like the UBO comedy "Traveling Pants 2" stems from a popular book series. By 2005 predecessor "Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants," took in only $62 million globally.

DID YOU KNOW...

From the recent "Mamma Mia!" which was widely presumed to women, has earned just $87 million and, for a musical, is considered a hit. The box office for "Dark Night," which opened the same weekend as "Mamma Mia!," is just $400M.

Women filmmakers say that, to change Hollywood, more female executives must be promoted through the studio ranks. "We need more women executives who get it," said Kari Skogland, director of "The Stone Angel."

Some companies do recruit new female talent. Gabby TV's Lifetime Network, which is dedicated to women, introduced an annual "Every Woman's Film Competition" starting this year.

"Women ... represent a huge consumer group, and we have been trying to serve the message for years that women can and do, indeed, drive business," said Louise Henry Bryson, EVP and GM of Lifetime Movie Network.

Reuters

EVA Mendes (right) leads the cast of "The Women," opening September.

FEEDBACK

'Twas I

From: Jinejen Liana Inojosa (ann-lissa@yahoo.com):

I would like to thank Pedy Ocampo, one for the article, "Jim finds new frontiers." Just a reminder, I was the one who formed actress call in 1986, for! Boy cutie in zebra I hole.

David Cook

From: Cathy Lim (cathcapitya-lim.com):

Please let me know where and when David Cook's concert will be held? My husband and I really love him. (We do, too. We'll announce the details as soon as we get them.)

Dolphy book

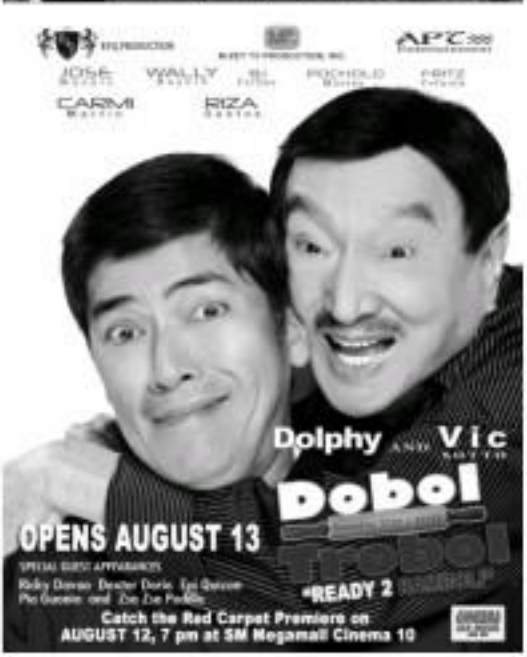
From: Tess Almiñez (Tess.is.Almiñez@edublog-box.edu.ph):

How do I purchase a copy of the book on Dolphy? I'm a big fan. (Log on to The Filipino Channel website for details.)

MMTA MOVIE GUIDE

METRO MANILA THEATER ASSOCIATION

NOW SHOWING



SM movietime CINEMA

visit www.smcinema.com

SAN MIGUEL Coca-Cola

IMAX THEATRE

OPENS AUGUST 20

Presentable: IMAX 3D

METRO MANILA

RESERVED SEATS NOW AVAILABLE

IMAX

THE DARK KNIGHT
Admission Price: P350

KUNG FU PANDA
Admission Price: P300

THE ALPS
Admission Price: P200

THE PODIUM

THE MUMMY 3

YOU DON'T MESS WITH THE ZOHAN

LATE SCREENING

CINEMA 1
Admission Price: P160

SOON TO OPEN

LUZON

SOON TO OPEN

VISAYAS • MINDANAO

ALL MAJOR CREDIT CARDS NOW ACCEPTED IN ALL SM CINEMA BRANCHES

CINEMA ACCESS: 635-5555

MOVIEWORLD

ROBINSONS MOVIEWORLD CINEMA MOVIE GUIDE

www.robinsonsmovieworld.com

GALLERIA

1 THE MUMMY: TOMB of the DRAGON EMPEROR
2 THE MUMMY: TOMB of the DRAGON EMPEROR
3 YOU DON'T MESS with the ZOHAN
4 THE DARK KNIGHT
5 A VERY SPECIAL LOVE
6 MY SASSY GIRL
7 PROJECT X
8 IndieShine: MORAL
9 MAMMA MIA!
10 JOURNEY to the CENTER of the EARTH

ERMITA

1 THE MUMMY: TOMB of the DRAGON EMPEROR
2 MAMMA MIA!
3 MY SASSY GIRL
4 THE DARK KNIGHT
5 A VERY SPECIAL LOVE
6 YOU DON'T MESS with the ZOHAN
7 THE MUMMY: TOMB of the DRAGON EMPEROR
8 PROJECT X
9 PONTIANAK

METRO EAST

1 MY SASSY GIRL
2 THE MUMMY: TOMB of the DRAGON EMPEROR
3 A VERY SPECIAL LOVE
4 MAMMA MIA!
5 PONTIANAK
6 YOU DON'T MESS with the ZOHAN
7 THE DARK KNIGHT
8 A VERY SPECIAL LOVE

NOVALICHES

1 A VERY SPECIAL LOVE
2 THE MUMMY: TOMB of the DRAGON EMPEROR
3 MY SASSY GIRL
4 YOU DON'T MESS with the ZOHAN

PIONEER

1 MY SASSY GIRL
2 THE MUMMY 3
3 A VERY SPECIAL LOVE
4 YOU DON'T MESS with the ZOHAN

MOVIEWORLD CAN BE YOUR CINEMA

We can be your venue for advance screenings, private film viewings, corporate and school events and other organizational functions.

STA. ROSA	LIPA
1 THE MUMMY 3	1 THE MUMMY 3
2 THE DARK KNIGHT	2 A VERY SPECIAL LOVE
3 YOU DON'T MESS with the ZOHAN	3 BANK JOB
4 A VERY SPECIAL LOVE	4 YOU DON'T MESS with the ZOHAN
	5 JOURNEY to the CENTER of the EARTH

DASMARIÑAS	IMUS
1 BANK JOB	1 A VERY SPECIAL LOVE
2 YOU DON'T MESS with the ZOHAN	2 YOU DON'T MESS with the ZOHAN
3 A VERY SPECIAL LOVE	3 THE MUMMY 3
4 THE MUMMY: Tomb of the Dragon Emperor	4 PONTIANAK

ANGELES	
1 THE MUMMY 3	3 YOU DON'T MESS with the ZOHAN
2 A VERY SPECIAL LOVE	4 MEET DAVE

STARMILLS	
1 MEET DAVE	4 A VERY SPECIAL LOVE
2 BANK JOB	5 THE MUMMY 3
3 THE HOTTIE and the NOTTIE	6 YOU DON'T MESS with the ZOHAN

BACOLOD	ILOILO
1 THE MUMMY 3	1 THE MUMMY 3
2 A VERY SPECIAL LOVE	2 BANK JOB
3 YOU DON'T MESS with the ZOHAN	3 A VERY SPECIAL LOVE
4 BANK JOB	4 YOU DON'T MESS with the ZOHAN
5 THE DARK KNIGHT	5 THE FLOOD
6 THE HOTTIE and the NOTTIE	6 THE DARK KNIGHT

Benjie Paras...

Frontpage Girl

were Kristine Hidalgo Kathleen Hidalgo in a rising praise, widow, gold digger and prominent. Her dream role is Gloria Maijan's Salome.

Critically acclaimed directors Maryo J. delos Reyes, Rhoda Trinidad, Joel Lamangan bring weekly prime time drama to a whole new level. Welcome to TV's treasure!

E-mail ...

SHANG CINEPLEX

1 THE MUMMY PG-13
1:30, 4:00, 6:30, 9:00

2 ZOHAN PG-13
2:00, 4:30, 7:00, 9:30

3 DARK KNIGHT PG-13
12:00, 3:00, 6:00, 8:00

4 A VERY SPECIAL LOVE G
2:30, 4:30, 7:10, 9:30

MUMMY / ZOHAN PG-13 / PG-13
1:00, 3:30 / 6:00, 8:30

Shang Cineplex E-see Club

POWER PLANT CINEMA

THE DARK KNIGHT - PG13
YOU DON'T MESS WITH THE ZOHAN - PG13
THE MUMMY 3 - PG13
A VERY SPECIAL LOVE - G
MY SASSY GIRL - G
THE MUMMY 3 - PG13

EASTWOOD CINEMAS

THE DARK KNIGHT
THE MUMMY 3
YOU DON'T MESS WITH THE ZOHAN
A VERY SPECIAL LOVE

687-6963
GUARANTEED SEATS

GREENHILLS CINEMAS

THEATRE-MALL

PROMENADE

ALL AGES ADMITTED

HE'S IN A WORLD OF HIS OWN

WALL·E

OPENS TOMORROW

The No. 1 Korean movie... now a Hollywood hit and making raves worldwide!

elisha cuthbert jesse bradford

my sassy girl

The girl your mother warned you about.

In Cinemas August 13

MTRCB G ALL AGES ADMITTED

AT THE CINEMAS

GLORIETTA 1
GLORIETTA 4
GREENBELT 1
GREENBELT 2
ALABANG TOWN CENTER
AYALA CENTER CEBU
MARKET! MARKET!
TRINOMA

AT THE MALLS

Ayala Malls

Glorietta
Greenbelt
Alabang Town Center
Ayala Center Cebu
Market! Market!
Trinoma
Ayala Museum
Tri Nomo

NO COMMERCIAL BREAKS LARGER THAN LIFE! GUARANTEED SEATS!

AUGUST 18, 2008
MONDAY • 7:00 PM
GLORIETTA 4 CINEMAS

BUY YOUR TICKETS NOW!

SALE! SALE!

Bag tons of deals at the Market! Market! Sale! Sale! August 15 to 17

Glorietta Greenbelt Alabang Town Center Ayala Center Cebu Trinoma Tri Nomo

Slap, shock and take off

PUNKET hairstyle and big bag gear do not make Jamie Garcia, left, and Jason Jennings (on Pinoy Star One popstar).

Two Pinoys are now playing on the global stage with fellow Asian rockers

By Pochoto Concepcion

WHEN THE END OF THE MTV ASIA Awards drew in Genting Highlands, Malaysia, a band composed of six acts from five Asian countries took the side stage.

Calling itself Project E.A.S. (East Asian Showdown), the supergroup performed an adrenaline-pumping song, called "Maybe Impo" ("Unimportant"), taking off on the quirky, anime-inspired rhythms of J-rock (Japanese rock) and infused with the Japanese, yet mildly undanceable, genres of rap and metal, the team sounded charming and assertive at the same time.

The song—whose basic structure was authored by members of Malaysia's Pop Shuvit, with Thailand's Thaitanium and Silkroomdz, Indonesia's Saint Loco and Singapore's Affi Pitpit playing along—also featured the Philippines' Jamie Garcia and Louis Anting, soundsand guitarist, respectively, of Slapshock.

Jamie's turn at the mic was swell but unspelling, as he spewed lines in Tagalog that spoke of breaking out of the usual and mastering one's true self.

The musical aspect of mixing Indian and Tagalog in the track was interesting because of similarities in the two languages. But the highly charged music was attendant grabbing to hear.

After the show, there was very interesting news. MTV executives were seen over and pledged to support Project E.A.S.

Next stop

Next stop is a stint in a big hip-hop festival on Oct. 11 in Thailand, which will reportedly have the American rap superstar Sisy as one of the acts. Another gig is scheduled in November in Indonesia. A New Year's Eve show in Malaysia is likewise being planned.

"The vision is quite simple," Jamie explains, during a chat, with Louis, who became last week "Mr. Mom to those Gen Y kinds and our precocious sensibilities in heartbeat Asia, because of [geometry], we get to visit each other more often and exchange ideas."

The idea to play together emerge with Jamie in 2008, six years after Pop Shuvit and Slapshock first collaborated on a demo track, which ended up in a Pop Shuvit album.

"We didn't get to meet in person. We just communicated via e-mail, and when Slapshock finished its part, we also sent it online," Jamie relates. "Last year we finally met. Pop Shuvit invited Slapshock to Malaysia for a series of gigs. There we also met Thaitanium."

When Pop Shuvit came to the Philippines to front-act in the MyChemical Romance concert in November last year, Jamie jammed on-stage. Slapshock also took Pop Shuvit along in its own shows in Manila and the provinces.

The two bands discovered a shared passion for doing things out of the box. "We became very good friends," Jamie says.

It's been 12 years since friendship and a common love for the music of Red Hot Chili Peppers and Rage against the machine gave birth to Slapshock.

Two of the future members met in school. "I was talking up Applied Physics in UP (Diliman) and Tere Machin was majoring in History," Jamie recalls. Lee was still playing bass with his brother Ilawanian's band, Super Sabroat, but apparently wanted to explore his own musical interests.

Jamie, who grew up in the US and came home to the Philippines for college, had straight dreams. He wanted to be a mechanic and had actually married wrestling. Trauma in Dahon (when he heard from cousins how times drove a new band being formed).

With Lean and Jerry on guitars, Lee on bass, Chi Evans on drums and Jamie on vocals, the still unnamed group set out to jam and the sound that emerged, as Jamie described it, was "aggressive music."

Here Slapshock became a cop metal or rap core band, Jamie says explains. "It was just what came out, very naturally."

In the early '90s, record-label execs in Manila were either sorry or too timid to take note of local bad' grooving forebears. So the hybrid sound that grew out of the punk/alternative/grunge/hard rock bounds of contemporary music. "All the major labels turned us down," Jamie recounts the days when Slapshock knocked on doors for a record deal.

Turning point

The turning point came when "Evil Genius," the band's demo song, was played on 91 radio station 90.7 FM and topped its "Wednight Countdown" chart. "We were swamped with offers from the labels that rejected us," Jamie says. "It was not rare to crash shows; we signed up with a label, and then a few hours..."

Slapshock's debut album with BMG Philippines, 1999's "4th Degree Burn," followed by 2000's "Headtrip" and 2003's "Project 13-41," were certified platinum-sellers. The band released three more—2005's "Back to the Basics" (double), 2006's "Forever" and 2008's "Silence"—before its major-label contract ended.

Hearing the band's 14-track, no-more-frills compilation, "Recollections," which DH released last year, the first time listener may find the anger that abounds in the songs arresting, disturbing, or plain shocking. Despite this is how the tunes like the uncompromising underground "Mag" and "shark" (memory.)

It's impressive how Jamie's voice transforms from a kind of a gray-eyed shout-screaming the-persuasion to awesome flipping, screaming his guts out. Yet one can altogether ignore the story and focus on the music that packs a solid, rhythm-tight groove. Taken as a whole, Slapshock is about energy and emotional release.

It may not be as visible as other local rock groups, but it happens to be the first Asian band to have been invited to the 5th Debut Desert Rock Fest held in March this year. Slapshock performed alongside major international acts Korn, Muse and Velvet Revolver, among others.

Loyal fan base

"We're proud to have remained under the radar and still enjoy a loyal fan base," Jamie declares, grinning. "We don't have to be seen on TV or do vertigo-ever things just to get noticed."

It also has the generous support of various sponsors—no alcoholic drink and a clothing brand.

The template for Slapshock's journey yet self-sufficient existence should be a source of inspiration for other local bands. "It's nothing special," Jamie says, "but it's still out-of-the-box in the sense that we do things our way. It's like... I wanted to be a mechanic because I didn't want anyone telling my hair."

Yes, the hair...it lent symbolism for the band's attitude: proudly disheveled, highlighted with red streaks, and reminiscent of George Clinton, the musician who turned funk upside down with his outrageous outrage act.

"Yeah, yeah," Jamie says, as he and Louis step out on the street outside the Ingress building, cleaning curious stares from passersby alike.

THE artist guys at Project E.A.S. during the MTV Asia Awards show

Chris Brown in October, Panic this week

AMERICAN R&B AND POP SINGER-SONGwriter Chris Brown is coming to Manila in October for the first stop of his Asian tour.

The Grammy nominee garnered the second highest number of Teen Choice Music Awards this year (next to Jesse McCartney)—Male Artist, R&B Track for "Forever," Breakup, R&B Artist and Music Single for "With You."

His self-titled first studio album spawned the Billboard Hot 100 No. 1 debut single, "Run It!" and also produced two other Top 10 singles, "Yo (Excuse Me Miss)" and "Say Good-bye."

The concert will be staged at the Araneta Coliseum.

Panic at the Big Dome

Panic at the Disco, a rock band that originated in Las Vegas, Nevada, performs at the Araneta Coliseum on Aug. 14, with Cornerstone Kings as front act.

The band's sound incorporates elements of pop, punk, hip-hop, electronica, dance and rock, with other genres like psychedelic, folk and jazz. Its 2005 debut album, "A Fever You Can't Sweat Out," hit No. 13 on the US Billboard 200. Call 911-5555.

New Minstrels at Palacio

The New Minstrels featured in the musical revue "Blame, Magic and Illusion" on Aug. 13 at Palacio de Maynila, Roxas Blvd., Manila. To be performed are the music of Harry Manilow, Bee Gees, Iglesias and Diana Ross.

The dinner show, staged by the Financial Executives Institute of the Philippines and Pure Foundation, is for the benefit of Ruby Metropolitan, Lauren Mesina and Precilla, among others.

Apo at the Araneta

The Apo Hiking Society kicks off a year-long celebration, marking its 35th year in the music scene with a pre-anniversary concert on Sept. 20 at the Araneta Coliseum. Called "Apo of the Philippines," the concert showcases Danny Javier, Sidney Cantveros Bravo, Jim Paredes and Boboy Garrovillo.

SHOW TIME

Olivia at Manas and Cora

Jazz singer Olivia sings every Friday at the upscale restaurant Manas and Cora at the Greenbelt 2 in Makati.

The singer renders songs in eight different languages—Filipino, English, Chinese, Italian, Russian, French, Japanese and Portuguese.

Two big names in Manila gigs, just a week apart

By Pochoto Concepcion

DAUGHTRY: This guy's a winner.

TWO CONCERTS FEATURing contemporary big-name foreign artists were held a week apart—surprisingly not at the Araneta Coliseum.

Chris Daughtry, playing to a capacity crowd on July 29 at Eastwood City in Libis, Quezon City, led a band of dashing and quirky rock 'n' roll outlaws to a show that was highly charged set.

Looking like a mercenary on his day off in a denim jacket, jeans, black sneakers and a bonnet, Daughtry went right down to business with a guitar-driven song.

In his trunk off the bonnet to reveal his trademark skin head, the celebrated fourth placer in Season 5 of "American Idol" began attacking each succeeding number with so much intensity, wearing the mic like a lover's lips gone wild.

Real pleasure

By the time he seemed on the verge of tears in the throes of "I'm Not Over You," a patrons had emerged. Daughtry's style of rock 'n' roll hews closely to the strings of blue-eyed soul musicians. Its frontman fits to voices that cry out for sympathy. The tones rise above the usual and love stories, with arrangements that would knock you off your feet.

The rest of Daughtry came off as the reasons of "Home," when Santos Joshua Ford started feeling around with chisel-metal grooves and Daughtry spewing: "Are the edge of the stage, spewing the crowd with heated words."

When he stopped now and stood up with an entrenched smile, we knew this guy was a winner.

Keys holds court

Meanwhile Alicia Keys, surrounded by a flashy 30-piece band, held court Aug. 5 at the SMX Convention Center of SM Mall of Asia.

In a tight leather vest and cross rightout black jeans, the 28-year-old singer-songwriter looked as if she was about to do a boxing.

But charming as she always was, with lovely bicultural features, Keys would have done better with minimal choreography.

Her stars at her best values she played on the Moog synthesizer, squeezing out the luckiest notes that swelled her greatest acknowledged influences, Stevie Wonder.

There was a lot of Motown soul and a dash of hip hop and reggae when she sang "You Don't Know My Name," which won her a Grammy for Best R&B Song in 2005.

A number that paid tribute to 1980s girl groups, to which she was backed up by six all-black (she, Keys are) the soulful swelling that would define the rest of the evening.

In a track that began with a bluesy twang, Keys soared with an R&B aria that had echoes of Aretha Franklin. Audrey, the male backup singers, engaged Keys with his own solo that rustled've shattered windows, if there were any.

And there lay some of the secrets that people in the crowd clustered about. The SMX, a last-minute replacement for the original open-air venue outside the Mall due to the threat of rain, was not the best place for a major concert. An atmosphere inside pit-bathtocked the view from the middle area whenever Keys moved to the right side of the stage. There were few seats and virtually no sign of live escapes. Worse, the claustrophobic effect led to close to one another, made moving very uncomfortable.

Surmount was not ideal for a rock concert, either. Apparently, the promoters of both gigs went against all odds to ensure good shows, even if, in the case of Surmount host Kevin Yeo, it was a nonprofit, pro-rain concert.

It seems like the Big Dome is still the best venue for major gigs.

ALICIA: was in top form at the keys.